

THIS QUARTER

Edited & Published by EDWARD W. TITUS

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THIS QUARTER

April - May - June, 1930

EDITORIALLY

THE FIRST The present issue completes the
TWELVEMONTH first year of the publication of
 THIS QUARTER under our editorship.

We have had no "platform," no "program." We have thrust no manifestoes upon the world. We have not been modern beyond the day or reason. Platforms and programs are formulated to be denied, departed from, regretted. Manifestoes, when they are not mere soliloquies, furnish a moment's amusement, and fall into oblivion. Whoever attempts to stop the eternal current of things, is overthrown by the current or only diverts or divides it. The current itself is not arrested nor its identity changed.

We have not set the Seine on fire and have kept clear of unbalanced isms in literature. If we have had no platform and programs, we have had our definite plans. Our pages have been open to writers of all schools. Literary politics we have abstained from,—a difficult thing, this, in a city like Paris which has been for centuries a seething cauldron of literary politics. *Fumisterie*, also, we have kept away from. We shall maintain our unattachment, but enlarge our scope.

We venture to say that no periodical published in the English language, certainly none published in that language in a foreign country, has within the covers of four issues brought together such a constellation of contributors as it has been our pleasure and privilege to put before our readers this past year. Side by side with contributions by writers of prominence we have published

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material in prose and verse by writers as yet unknown or unestablished. If our readers will cast their eyes over the index pages for the just completed year, to be found at the end of this issue, they will agree, we feel, that a very creditable, discriminating and well-balanced result has been obtained.

A large portion of the preceding issue of THIS QUARTER has been devoted to material by French writers. The present issue is, in large part, devoted to translations from contemporary Italian literature. The next issue will be a Russian one and will be followed by German, Spanish and Polish numbers, respectively. This, we think, will prove to be an innovation both useful and interesting, the more so as the translations are in each instance the work of experts chosen with scrupulous care.

(E. W. T.).



TRANSIT On the eve of going to press we read in a Paris American daily that *transition* will, in its forthcoming issue, announce the cessation of publication. There having been no denial of the report, we must assume its correctness. And we are sincerely sorry that this is so.

Whatever views may have been held of *transition's* usefulness as an organ of literary expression,—and the views were varied, indeed, and always defended with much zeal and passion, by partisans and opponents—it cannot be denied that it had performed a valuable function. Its courage was always admirable, if at times misdirected. Its chief merit, to our mind, lay in the opportunities it afforded, liberally and sincerely, to young writers, often utterly undisciplined, anarchic, and ill-disposed to all that appertains to legitimately publishable literary expression, to give vent in print to their supposedly artistic troubles and aspirations.

An editorial policy that could, without illusion as to ultimate artistic fruitage—we take it there has been no such illusion—and in good faith, extend every facility to the printing of such material is a public-spirited one which deserves to be acknowledged and admired. If some of those young writers have emerged later from the chrysalis of grotesqueness and entered the ranks

EDITORIAL NOTE

of serious and more widely accepted craftsmen, so much greater a credit is due to an editorial attitude that has made such a thing possible.

Established writers, with some exceptions,—very notable exceptions, let it be said,—have kept aloof from collaboration with *transition*. Whether this was due to *transition's* particular estimate of the writers, or of the writers' estimate of *transition*, only the initiate can reveal.

Much as we would like to do so, the report of the cutting short of *transition's* interesting career reaches us too late to permit a review of its activities at greater detail; but not too late to express to Mr. Eugene Jolas, its brilliant editor, our sincerest wishes for the greatest measure of success in whatever direction he may have decided to employ his rare talents in the future

(E. W. T.).

ITALICA

THEATRICALS AND THE WAR

The World War has been blamed, and praised, for many things. How much of the praise, or the blame, is merited remains, in all likelihood, to be sifted out by the generations to come. One point, however, seems fairly certain, and that is that the Italian theatre of today, of which we have an example in the Pirandello play presented in the present issue of *THIS QUARTER*, is nothing if not, as Signor Camillo Pellizzi, the latest historian of contemporary Italian literature, puts it, the product of after-the-War disorientation.

The Italians, returning from the front lines, found themselves in something other than a lyric mood. There are, after all, limits to the lyric impulse. Disillusionment may, more often than not, be the food of lyricism; but there are times when it is conquered by the drama of the situation. In any event, the peninsular after-the-War mood was, certainly, a dramatic rather than a lyric one; and the elements of the contemporary Italian theatre are to be discovered in conditions following the War. The Italians, for one thing, had enough of the D'Annunzian-epic sort of thing. The War was an epic in itself, and what other was there that remained to be written? On the other hand, the setting, social, economic, political and spiritual, the arraignments and alignments, were essentially of the theatre, and the theatre appeared to be the natural, the inevitable expression.

It may or may not have been a new thoughtfulness induced by the War that led to the "intimate, intellectual, psychologic" (we quote Pellizzi again) drama of Pirandello. But Pirandello, realist and traditionalist, was not the source of the thing. The impulse, as a matter of fact, derives from the "grottesco" theatre of Luigi Chiarelli, and the production of the latter's *La Maschera e il volto* (*The Mask and the Face*) in 1916. This "grotesque" in three acts is the start of what Tilgher, the Italian critic and philosopher, has termed "the theatre of rela-

tivity" (*teatro della relatività*). It marks the end of the old bourgeois drama, which had been effectively slain by Futurism. "Masks and Faces" perfectly expresses this new playhouse. It is a theatre in which reality is set over against the belief in will, feeling against the illusion of feeling. The thing we have is, in short, a dramatic play of antitheses.

This purely psychologic drama undergoes, in the hands of such a playwright as Luigi Antonelli, a fantastic exteriorization; it becomes more "interioristic" (the word is the Italians' own).

Then comes Pirandello, who represents, the fact is, the final impulse of Italian truth-telling (*verismo*). The trend of the after-War theatre has been in the direction of the grotesque, of satire, of parody and of farce, while the *teatro grottesco* found a reflection in a satiric and polemic comedy. The new theatre, with its conversation-with-the-audience, became in a manner a parody of the old, and this tendency was given a fantastic turn in the distinguished contributions of Massimo Bontempelli. Finally, we have the thing reduced to a satire on satire, as in the mystifying pseudo-"Russian" take-off, *Wassili Cetoff*, by Luigi Bonelli. Bontempelli, Vergani and Alberto Cecchi, all have done their share toward the development of a new form. Bontempelli, in particular, is deserving of credit. Possessed of a sharpened sensitivity to the modern scene, a sensitivity that very frequently achieves expression in a reduction to the absurd, he contributed in his *Nostra Dea*, performed in 1925, an intellectual, vivaciously humorous and paradoxical "acrobatic fantasy upon a relativist theme."



LOGIC AND THE FOOTLIGHTS It is impossible to grasp the full significance of Luigi Pirandello as a playwright, unless one is conscious of the dramatist's literary origins. Pirandello began as a provincial story-writer of Sicily and southern Italy, and so, exhibits a certain bond with Verga and others. A part of his youthful education having been received in Germany, it was among the Teutons that he found Sicilian passion confronted with absolute logic and the theoretic problem. After completing his

philological studies, he returned to Italy to earn his livelihood as a country schoolmaster, a calling which gave him opportunity for minute and extended observation of rural character. It was, indeed, out of a true-to-life storyteller with a taste for folklore that the symbolical dramatist that we today know was to emerge. For Pirandello's "symbolism" is essentially an after-War development, following Chiarelli, of Italian *verismo*; it is a development of the *grottesco*. His drama is the drama of life and form, of the conflict and conflicting interrelations between life and form. And all this is a reflection of the dramatist himself. His *Six Characters in Search of an Author* stands as a personal confession. This same life-and-form drama (life and the dream) is to be seen in the hitherto unpublished and as yet unacted playlet, *A Dream (but perhaps not)*, *Un Sogno (forse no)*, given in the present number of THIS QUARTER.

What we have, in short, in the case of Pirandello, is an intellect that is the battle-ground between a certain epic real-life passion and a passion for generalization and the abstract. Prevented thereby from writing either epics or lyrics, the dramaturge proceeds to put upon the boards, artistically, the drama that is taking place within his own mind. In doing so, he has a fund of technical mastery to fall back upon, growing out of his gifts and his training as a story-teller. Is his work classic? One of his critics finds it "middlingly" (*mediocrement*) so, if we take classicism as implying a complete fusion, the complete immersion and persuasion of the artist in his work. Perhaps, we may sum it up by agreeing that Pirandello, among Italian writers of today, is the last of the southern *veristi*.

One thing is certain. Pirandello, like other contemporary Italian playwrights, is a product of the War. The after-War drama is the drama of life and form, life and the dream-form; and it is one, seemingly, that can only be approached with paradox or irony.

Meanwhile, the Italian theatre is carrying on, and Pirandello, venerable figure that he is, is not the last word. The theatre of the day would appear to be Anton Giulio Bragaglia's *Teatro degli indipendenti*, with its utilization of futuristic experience and its catching-up

of everything from Cubism and Dadaism to the *ballets russes*. The hopeful thing about Bragaglia is that he is, actually, a "man of the theatre," what we term a "producer." A vigorous personality, he is one who fights for his ideas. The art for which he stands is, in large part, an art of creating the immediate effect, the instantaneous impression. His forward-looking gifts and his insight into the true nature of his craft are indicated in an extensive study which he has recently published on a "theatric theatre." In other words, it is back to a theatre in the etymologic, the Greek, sense of the word, where one goes to see things and, through seeing, to have things happen to one emotionally. His plea is one in favor of the pure spectacle, of orchestrated staging and "scenic intelligence."

The War, again, was a theatre, where one went whether one would or not, and where things did happen to one. The result: a distaste for dialogue and the old verbal and literary props. The artistic—at any rate, the theatric—effect must now be as instantaneous as a shell.



THE TRUTH ABOUT FASCISM We are hearing a good deal about Fascism, pro and con, chiefly con, these days.

Much that we hear is, unfortunately, of a sensational character that is not calculated to impress one who is fond of forming his judgments slowly and with some degree of safety. It is to be noted that among the voices raised against Fascism, the avowed Communists make very little noise. A recent American convert to the creed of Moscow, who happens to be a resident of Italy, is even to be heard, in conversation, defending the Mussolini régime.

"It interferes," he says, "with no one but cranks. Any one in Italy who wants to do something constructive finds nothing in his way. The trouble is, most of our outside impressions are derived from some newspaper correspondent or other whose amour-propre has been offended, and who has not been intelligent enough to take account of the political necessity of certain measures at a certain time."

Which leads one to wonder just how far apart, in the

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end, the two collectivisms are. That democracy has, in fact, broken down in other places would seem to be almost too evident for discussion. Is it not possible that the trend is back to a new collectivism of some sort, as in the Middle Ages, even if not precisely the same kind of collectivism that the Middle Ages knew?

Whatever the future of Il Duce or his system, the close-up and accurate observer of the Italian literary scene cannot fail to be impressed by the manner in which the present régime is being backed up by writers and artists generally. Pirandello, let us not forget, is a Fascist; Marinetti, founder of Futurism, is a member of the Academy, and Bontempelli, report has it, is soon to be. The counter-argument is that adherence, on the whole, is not voluntary in genesis, but motivated by circumstance. This is one of those arguments which, for practical purposes, admit of no answer. The thing must be *felt*, and it is hard to see how the calm-tempered and qualified student can help feeling that the Fascist state is merely a reflection of something that, in Italy, is "in the air," something which contemporary literature, so to speak, is catching out of the air. The epic and heroic vein which dates back to the beginning of the century, and back further still, to the Risorgimento, is far from having been exhausted as yet.

The point is, Italy to all appearances is a unit, intellectually and politically, for good or ill. The thought was expressed recently by Arturo Tofanelli, writing in *L'Italia Letteraria*:

"There is no such thing as intellectuals who live their day outside the common working life of the nation, but all, at one and the same time,—soldiers and black-shirts, populace and artists,—are bound together in the common lot, in triumph and in peril."

If this is true, it is something for any nation to have accomplished.

It may be as well to school ourselves into an academic detachment on the subject of Signor Mussolini, by turning our attention to the unimpassioned annual put out by the *Centre International d'Études sur le Fascisme* at Brussels. There, we will learn that Fascism is a reaction against Renaissance individualism, that it is a form of pragmatic relativism (page the late William James), and, lastly, that it represents a revolution against

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the decadent liberal state and, as such, is a challenge to Democracy.

This is a challenge with which our watery-eyed liberals of the *Nation* and the *New Republic* stamp in America are, naturally, not quite capable of dealing. The Brussels *Annuaire* happens to be based upon documents, not upon pink-tea sentiment. And it is, as usual, a truly liberal-minded France that is responsible for the investigation.

One of the continental arguments against Fascism is that it is "anti-European." The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* dwelt upon this in a recent editorial (January 5, 1930). But Nietzsche's "European," one would have thought, had had his chance.

(S. P.).

A MINIATURE ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN LITERATURE.

Compiled and Edited

by

Samuel Putnam.

The object of this Anthology is not merely to afford something of a rounded view of the creative Italy of today, but, employing a word popularized in recent years by the French, to present a miniature "Panorama" of modern Italian literature, from the close of the nineteenth century to the present time.

*The romantically striding, histrionic figure of D'Annunzio, of course, dominates that epoch which Giuseppe Ravagnani has termed the "sunset" of Ottocentismo. D'Annunzio exerted a vast and profound influence over the youth of his generation, an influence that lasted for a quarter-century or more; but to the newer generations, it would appear, he has little if anything to say; he is now an historic, rather than a literary figure. Born at Pescara, in 1863, his writing career began with his lyric volume, *Primo vere*, in 1879, while his *Il compagno dagli occhi senza cigli* and the second volume of his *Faville del maglio* were published in 1928. The sonnet, *I seminatori*, by which he is represented in this number, has been chosen for the reason that it gives a somewhat less familiar aspect of the duce who preceded Signor Mussolini.*

Grazia Deledda, Nobel prize-winner, scarcely needs, any more than D'Annunzio, an introduction to the English-speaking reader. Deledda may be looked

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upon as representing the provincial phase of modern Italian literature. She writes of the primitive life of her native Sardinia, of which many Italians, even, up to a few years ago, knew very little. Her chief qualities are her vividness, concision, rapidity of stroke. Her chief fault, perhaps, is a too literary over-striving for simplicity. More than a decade ago, Papini spoke of "the colorful swoonings of that pretentious literary dialect which Grazia Deledda manipulates with a Sardinian frankness." The Assassin of the Trees (*L'Assassino degli alberi*) is taken from a volume of short stories, *Le Tentazioni*. Deledda was born at Nuoro, in 1876. Her first collection of tales, the *Amore regale*, was published in 1891, her first novel, *Fior di Sardegna*, in 1892. Her *Il Sigillo d'amore* appeared in 1926, and it was the following year that she received the Nobel award.

Antonio Fogazzaro was born in 1842 and died in 1911. His *Miranda* appeared in 1874, his *Leila* the year of his death. He is best known as the author of the *Piccolo mondo antico*, 1896, the *Piccolo mondo moderno*, 1900, and *Il Santo*, 1906. As a novelist, he is the "agitatore d'idée" type, with, at times, a connotation in his prose of the English Dickens. In his *Quiet Midday in the Alps* (*Quiete meridiana nell'Alpe*), we have him in a purely lyric mood. The biography by Gallarati-Scotti is well known.

This brings us down to the before-the-War more or less Futurist advance-guard, with *The Caravans* (*Le Carovane*) of Aldo Palazzeschi as a sample of the work of the school. A Carduccian ottocentismo, save for lingering traces, is now a thing of the past; Fogazzaro is dead, Deledda is a commercial success, and the influence of D'Annunzio is waning to its extinction in the War. Papini, with whom Palazzeschi was associated in the *Voce* group, is a dominating figure.

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Palazzeschi's poetic position is a purely lyric, temperamental and Crocean one. There is to be found in his work a certain contemplative and decadent renunciation of life. He has been termed a flagellant mystic, and has been compared to the American Poe. There will be discovered in his verse a certain comic irony and an anticipatory dabbling with typographic divagations. The poem here given is taken from the collection *Paesi e figure* and will be found in the winnowed volume, *Poesie*, which has just been published in the *Preda* series at Milan. The poet is a Florentine, born in 1885.

For a general if condensed view of the young after-the-War literature, the reader may be referred to the associate editor's article, *I Giovani*, in the present number.

Of the poets represented, Eugenio Montale, born at Genoa in 1896, is one of the best beloved of present-day Italian lyricists. The poems here given are taken from the author's one published volume, *Ossi di seppia* (Cuttle Bones), brought out in 1925, with an illuminating introduction by the critic, Alfredo Gargiulo. The dominant note in Montale is a cosmic despair. He is a sort of modern and lyric Lucretius, who has read his Einstein, his Bergson and others. His ideal remains, however, a pure lyricism. The Poem for a Friend has been selected for the reason that such expressions of a pure man-to-man relation are none too common in literature.

Umberto Saba is a Jewish poet and, animated by a racial melancholy marks a lyric return to a naïve realism—a sort of infantile naïveté. His verse at times has an almost Shakespearean ring. He is an important figure in the present writing generation, an entire number of the young magazine, *Solaria*, having been devoted recently to an *Omaggio a Saba*. One of his best known poems is a rather long one of epic quality

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entitled *L'Uomo* (Man). Saba, no longer of the youngest, was born at Trieste, in 1883, his first volume of verse having appeared in 1910. In spirit, none the less, he is of the *giovani*.

Of the prose-writers:

Massimo Bontempelli, founder and leader of the *Novecentisti*, or *Twentieth Century Group*, born at Como, in 1884, began his writing career in 1904. He is, at once, poet, novelist, critic and playwright. His best known theatrical piece, perhaps, is *Nostre Dea*, 1925. His latest novel, *Il Figlio di due madre* (The Son of Two Mothers) was published some months ago and already has been translated into a number of languages. The theories of Bontempelli and his followers are discussed in the article to which reference has been made. His diminutive novel here given is from his volume, *La Vita Intensa*.

Arturo Loria, born at Carpi (Modena) in 1902, represents, with Alessandro Bonsanti, the lyric phase of the Italian short story of today. Seemingly an irredeemable *fantaisiste*, he is in quest of a deeper reality. He has published two collections of short stories, *Il Cieco e la bellona*, 1928, and *Fannias Ventosca*, 1929. In his "magic realism," he has been compared with Poe.

Giovanni Comisso, born at Treviso, 1894, has been accused of a post-D'Annunzian neo-decadence, but he is possessed of a wholesome constitutional robustness that burst through it all, and which makes him more akin to our Hemingway or a McAlmon. He has published a trio of volumes since 1924.

Paola Masino, a member of the *Novecentist* group, has been selected as a contemporary literary representative of her sex, and her essay "The Decay of Dying," as an interesting and typical expression of the striving for, the reaching out after, an oversoul consciousness on the part of the present generation.

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She is also a short story writer of distinction. Her work will be found, largely, in the pages of "900," the Novecentist review. She is 21 years of age.

Leo Ferrero is one of Italy's most promising critics, essayists and estheticians. He is also known as a playwright. His esthetic treatise on the problem of Leonardo da Vinci, Leonardo, o del 'arte, published in 1928, with a preface by M. Paul Valéry, has been translated into French and has attracted wide and favorable critical comment. Signor Ferrero, like Bontempelli, Masino and a number of other Italian writers, is now living in Paris. His article The Tragic Grandeur of Italy will be found to be at once stimulating and revelatory.

Raffaello Franchi, a member of the Solaria group, is the author of a number of short novels, if such they may be termed, in which he develops a species of "intimismo". His touch is a light, sure, delicate one, and he is at his best in the short suggestive bit, such as the prose-poem here given. His personality is a rich and unusual one, and his literary craftsmanship is distinguished by its prevailing flawlessness.

Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, born at Polizzi Generoso (Palermo) in 1882, is an outstanding member of that generation which is now in its forties. Known as a critic and historian of literature, with a long and impressive list of works to his credit, he is a poet, novelist and playwright of achievement, his novel, Rubè, being commonly looked upon as something in the nature of a literary phenomenon. He is, at the present time, a regular contributor to the Corriere della Sera of Milan. The reader of Italian is referred to Signor Borgese's article, Il senso della letteratura italiana, a distinguished feat of criticism, which appeared in the January, 1930, number of the Nuova

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Antologia, and which has since been issued in pamphlet form.

Luigi Pirandello, dean of Italian dramatists, needs no word of introduction, and extended comment would be out of place here. Born at Girgenti in 1867, he began by publishing a volume of verse, *Mal giocondo*, in 1889. His theatrical repertoire will be found in the collection, *Maschere nude*. He is also the author of a number of short stories, novels, etc., and the publishing house of Bemporad at Florence is bringing out the complete works. At the time of his death, the late Scott-Moncrieff was engaged in translating Pirandello. Something as to Pirandello and the Italian theatre will be found in the editorial columns of this number. The Dream (Perhaps Not) is here published for the first time, and has not as yet been seen upon the stage.

Such a collection as this must, of necessity, remain sketchy. There are a number of Italian writers whose work the editor would have liked to include, had space permitted. Among the omitted ones, whom THIS QUARTER hopes to be able to publish in future numbers, may be mentioned: Corrado Alvaro of the Novecentist group, poet, novelist and short-story-writer; Alberto Consiglio, of the Solaria group, critic and short-story writer; Alberto Carocci editor of Solaria and short-story writer; Filippo Burzio, important essayist and critic; Bonaventura Tecchi, distinguished young critic, man of letters and short-story writer of exceptional promise; Orio Vergani, the Ramon Gomez de la Serna of Italy, whose novel, *Io, povero negro*, has just been published in America; Alberto Moravia; Marcello Gallian; etc.

THE FALCON

by

Arturo Loria.

The taxidermist came forward to greet the customer who had come in just as he was about to shut up shop. The latter came forward timidly, holding out in front of him a little closed hamper, like a ticket good at the gate.

"What is it? What can I do for you?"

The newcomer looked about him, admiring the feathered and mummified death upon the counter and the shelves and inside the showcase, and said:

"I have here a falcon, a live one."

Upon perceiving the other's surprise, he quickly added:

"I don't know how to kill him; I'm afraid of spoiling him. Since you are experienced in such matters, couldn't you do me this favor? Afterwards, of course, it will be your job to stuff him, for I want to keep him."

"The truth is...." the taxidermist hesitantly replied, "I only work with dead animals. A falcon might be a ticklish proposition.... and supposing he got away from me?"

"He can't get away," replied the man with the hamper, with an unperturbed smile. "Want to have a look at him? I've made a hood for him," and he began unbuckling the straps over the cover. "Poor beast!" he murmured, undoing the hamper with surprising haste. "It must have been a hard trip for him, but I hope he's still all right. He was such a beauty. Just see how done-in he looks!"

ARTURO LORIA

Raising the cover, he placed a cautious hand upon the feathered grayish-colored body that occupied the hamper.

"He's alive all right; quite warm," he then said, running his hand down to smooth the ruffled plumage. There was a sound that was like a puff of wind, followed by a cry that was smothered, cat-like and terrible.

"Just see how you've dressed him down!" exclaimed the taxidermist merrily. "He looks like an old lady!" and he bestowed a glance of fascinated admiration upon the falcon which, getting to its legs inside the hamper, stuck out a head that was tightly swathed in a dirty unstitched gauze, open far enough to admit the entrance of the hooked beak and with the appearance of being cleft in two by a reflection from the light.

The big bird raised a paw to a level with his bandaged eyes, stuck it out to explore the dark void about him, and then, drawing it in again, proceeded, limpingly and one-sidedly, to grip his claws about the rim of the basket.

"I fancy that a big needle...." the customer began, parting with a finger the bird's breast-feathers and showing all the will in the world to be a witness to the operation.

The taxidermist did not reply, but smilingly extended a hand protected by a rag, lifted the animal up and went over to deposit it upon a parrot's perch.

"Wrapped up in a hood the way he is, he's afraid to move," he said, inviting the other to have a look; and with a feather duster, he poked the big bird which, fluttering its wings, did its best to keep its balance upon the iron bar.

"Well, then," replied the owner of the falcon, as he closed the hamper, "will you kill him for me or not?"

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"I can kill him all right, but not now. Don't you see that I already have my street clothes on? Tomorrow morning as soon as I open up, I'll see to it. And anyway, there's no harm in waiting; it will give him a chance to get himself cleaned out on the inside."

"But he'll be skinny; he'll get ugly."

The taxidermist laughed.

"I'll be on the job to stuff him up with straw and cotton. We can leave him there; the way he is, he's as timid as a little chick." And ushering the man with the hamper out of the shop, he let down the roller-blinds, put on the padlocks and went out to join his customer, who was waiting for him upon the sidewalk to bargain over the price.

* * * * *

The center light, which the taxidermist absent-mindedly had left burning, shone dazzlingly in the shop. The falcon, frightened by the rumble of the roller-blinds, kept a firm hold upon the perch, an iron-gray outline with his head hidden under one wing.

Suddenly, he withdrew his head and stuck it out in front of him. He had caught the sharp scent of plumes and feathers, and an odor like that of abandoned nests, when the weather turns cold for a spell,—a cold that keeps things from rotting. His long imprisonment in the hamper had so chastened his sense of winged life that, upon encountering it once more in connection with this odor, he fancied that he had fallen into a rocky cave on top the bald-pated mountain which was his accustomed abode; there was lacking only the feeling of a wide wing-lifting expanse of air about him, comforting as a caress.

After that first roar of thunder, there was no further

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terrifying sound; only little distant peals kept up, and, every now and then, the muttering of stormy heavens, but far off, down upon the plain perhaps. Reassured, he strove to flap his wings. Spreading them wide apart, he fanned them up and down in a grave cadence, but their movement awoke a resonance that was too close up, a trembling of mysterious panes. The restricted space about him was a weight upon his timidly appeased wings.

With a tremulous and hesitant motion, he raised a claw to the gauze hood, and finding that it was possible to tear the hood, he summoned up all the strength he possessed to free himself. Time and again, with great mad wrenchings, he only succeeded in wounding his head and neck. With his beak, which had been freed from the loosened cords, he blindly tore away at the little ends and ravellings of the gauze, twisting them into impossible knots, while every car that passed in the street, every truck and wagon, was a rush of wind among the rocks, full of echoes that were new to him, dropped down there as he was in his immemorial cavern.

In order to keep his balance over the unknown abyss which he felt all about him, he frantically shook his wings, filling the room with a rumbling noise. The air thus set in motion brought back to him stronger than ever that abandoned-nest odor. The noose, by force of much pulling, had slipped down over his eyes. The falcon stuck out his neck and let out a low cry, straight in front of him, as though at an enemy; he repeated it five or ten times, and then, exhausted, fell silent and once more stuck his head under his wing.

When he resumed the struggle, it was slowly and calmly; he stuck his claws between his feathers and the gauze in order to tear the latter from within, by force of greater pressure. He withdrew them covered

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with blood and trembling from the force he had exerted, entangled with threads and tatters from which he tried to free himself. Suddenly, the cords as a result of much stretching slipped down from his head to his neck. It seemed that with them there swooped down a great fear, one that turned the bird of prey to ice, so motionless did he stand there. The headbands came to rest upon the shaggy feathers of his upper neck. Whereupon, exultantly and with little flutterings of his wing, the falcon regained his composure and set about working them still further down.

— He was free; he raised his dark and dolorous eyelids.

One scream, and like a flash of lightning he was upon the dove, a fat and shiny pigeon fastened to an imitation dried branch. He planted his claws in the dove's back and tremblingly plunged his famished beak into its throat. From his wing-muscles to his neck could be seen, going up in waves, the energy that enabled him to plunge and sink his beak deeper and deeper.

This was no warm throat filled with fluctuating blood; not a cry, not a single spasmic contraction; only a cold and resistant knot. The falcon withdrew his frightfully damaged beak from the wound; it was gushing straw. Blindly, madly, he hurled himself once more upon the dove's torn body, but all he encountered in his rage was a scattered handful of straw and feathers.

He lifted his cruel eyes to the lamplight, incredulous of the sun after the surprise he had just met with, and then, flung himself up to regain his seat on the perch.

Menacing and with ruffled plumage, he was agitated by the sight of the unnaturally large birds upright on little pedestals in every corner of the room. A

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flaming flamingo, a pelican with great pendent crop, another bird, crested and terrible, safe-seeming all of them in their immobility, held his gaze. Opposite him, in the showcase, other long-tailed members of the winged tribe were roosting, while a nest and row of little robin redbreasts defied his hunger. There was a silence as when, in the forest, the denizens became conscious of his own wheeling flight far up in the air.

He darted down like an arrow; he dug his claws into the glass, and was conscious at the same time of a great downward-swooping, fear-inspiring shadow. In his fall, he had injured one wing; he now moved it painfully and with difficulty. With little short steps, he took refuge in the shadow of a piece of furniture. There, crying out pantingly, as though to warn his winged brothers of his presence, he would stick his head out every so often and give a look around.

These winged brothers of his were quite composed, motionless and severe as he had never known them. The flamingo stood upright on one of its brown paws, covered with tiny scales, while the other paw was lifted up as though in a search of lice among the breast-feathers; the little colored birds were all engaged in pecking away at something upon a piece of wood, a sandy hillock, a bit of painted cork. Certain of them, with an intimacy unknown in the wild, were grouped about a dark-colored weasel, or else were posed upon a bough where a tufted-tailed squirrel had come to rest. A green woodpecker appeared to be expecting that the weight of his tail would supply him with the energy to go on pounding away with his tiny hammer in the well-hollowed hole of a limb; a yellow-eyed screech-owl, petrified sorceress, was looking straight ahead of her from a pair of sockets surrounded by an eddy of gray feathers; it was uninterested in bird-hunting or the quest of prey.

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In their instinctive attitudes was to be perceived a bewildered sense of peace, the certainty of unchangeableness, as though the atmosphere of the fairest woodland morning or of the swamp had accompanied each and every one of them to his pedestal or his compartment in the showcase. They even appeared to be unconscious of the close quarters and the bars about them, so unconscious that the hardiest flyers among them had their wings triumphantly spread out, without any impression of weight; and if they did not swoop, it was from the joy they took in being thus surprised in all their vivid coloring,—a coloring which appeared to melt into the air about it,—and in their dimensions of unexaggerated grandeur.

The falcon, coming out of the shadow of the furniture, appeared to be seeking from the flamingo an initiation into this enviable mystery. Finally, having given two or three little hops, he flew up onto the flamingo's back; and cautiously, with his beak, began rummaging among the bird's feathers. All he felt was a dried bark-like skin upon a false body, a body devoid of flesh and blood. Then, as though gladdened by this unexpected discovery, he lightly flew about the room, without seeking a place to alight. The shadow of his wheeling wings hid at moments the glow of the incandescent light, about which he had ended up by circling like a butterfly.

Worn out, with a bluish gleam in his eye, he came down to earth. The abandoned-nest odor had become more pungent, but he was tempted to no further adventures. The fixity of his own gaze and the deceptive luster of the glass expanded, within the showcase, the narrow confines within which those silent, motionless creatures stood. Some of them were puffed out as though about to take flight, still further exasperating the nervous falcon, who heard a brush of wings. But upon perceiving once more that all

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was as it had been, he spread his own wings and flapped them noisily two or three times.

From the rear of the shop, having found its way in through a gap in the curtains, a black shadow came flying. It was a bat, attracted by the big light. Supporting itself as best it could upon its quivering membranous wings, it circled the light a number of times and then came to rest, with a clash of claws, upon the enameled reflector.

The falcon was alarmed to see the lamplight oscillating, and sought in his memory something which would reveal the meaning of that shadow glimpsed upon the floor: a fluttering, butterfly-like shadow, not a steady one like his own which, under the midday sun, he took a pleasure in beholding as it impressively traversed the distant earth beneath him. As to this unknown flying creature, all he was able to make out was a palpitating velvety body upon the rim of the reflector. Frightened, he made a painful effort to spread his own wings and bring them together again, swathingly and protectingly, over his emaciated body. He kept on screaming and panting, low and hoarsely, from fear of being attacked at any moment. The presence of another living being in the room had destroyed his master-vandal's security; shut out from that peaceful silence, he was now invaded by the solitude of a congealing terror.

The light barely quivered: the enemy was lending it the effect of his own palpitant motion. Amid an iron din, red and blue lights now danced upon the ceiling, from a glass peephole in the roller-blinds.

It was the signal for battle.

The falcon flew up, above the light. The black leaf slipped down from the reflector and, crazed with terror, sought to evade the bird of prey by taking refuge against the walls. After a vain pursuit, the falcon, whose wing-play was not so rapid, took up

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a position on the showcase and there awaited his enemy. He could see him coming, through the abbreviated halo of the lamp, swerving quickly to one side and dropping lower down to continue his flight. The falcon fell upon him, hammering the victim with his beak, ripping open the membranous wings. The bat, having got the worst of it in this first encounter, now changed appearance: he seemed to have three wings, and in his flight, spurted a rain of blood, red and shining under the light.

The falcon, having gone back to his post on the counter, stood there among the stuffed creatures, puffed and bristling.

The wounded bat stubbornly attempted to get a hold on the white walls of the vault; but not being able to manage its torn wing, it gradually sank lower and lower, despite the frenzied motion of the uninjured wing. It encountered the surface of the counter in its fall and there spent its last despairing strength in vain tossings-about. Ferociously, the bird of prey descended to finish off his victim with blows from his beak. In its tremulous death agony, the bat seemed to be fleeing along the counter for a slippery, blood-bespattered space.

Of a sudden, disdaining his black and bloody prey, the victor took refuge upon his perch. Exhaustion or inability to bear the blinding light caused him to close his eyes, as he sought about him for a foothold on the perch, being forced to beat his wings to maintain his balance.

Gradually, he seemed at once to shrink and to swell out, his neck drawn in as though he were cold. He would shiver now and then and open his beak until it seemed that he would rip the membranes loose, in an effort to drink in an atmosphere that was wide and free, all the while raucously emitting a cry that was ever more and more suffocated. Upon opening

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his eyes once more his gaze came to rest upon a confused picture of winged creatures in the showcase, and then upon the flamingo, all this being accompanied by a sort of ecstasy, followed by an attempt to fly. The strength of his wings lifted him barely enough to make him appear taller and more majestic, but his claws continued to grip the perch like a pivot.

He was now proud and terrible to behold; he looked like one of those emblematic birds of prey which taxidermists expend their ingenuity in stuffing into just such attitudes as this.

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)



Drawing, by *de Pisis*.

THE LADY OF THE HENNAED HAIR

A Novel of Novels
(Episode for the month of May)

by
Massimo Bontempelli.

PREFACE

This novel has no preface having no need of one.

CHAPTER THE FIRST

The Terrible Jealous Spells of the Thirty-Five-Year-Old Signora Marta Calabieri

"Dans ces moments de jalousie,
on perd la tête le plus souvent :
des conseils écrits depuis long-
temps font bien."

STENDHAL, *De l'Amour*, 1. I
Chap. XXXV.

Signora Marta was exceedingly jealous.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

Unhappiness in the Study

"Give heed, all,
To my last sad words."
PETRARCH.

Signora Marta came to pay me a visit one Sunday.
She was shown in.

My lips said :

"Very glad to see you. Take a seat."

But meanwhile, my thoughts were saying :

"What the deuce does she want?"

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Her lips uttered the words:

"It's very nice here."

And her thoughts, meanwhile, were anxiously inquiring:

"How am I going to begin?"

I knew that this was what her thoughts were saying, for the reason that as soon as she entered, she had given me her hand in a very distracted manner, gazing all the while in the direction of the window. Then, taking a seat where I had indicated, her glance, gliding over the floor, quickly came to a stop at the left-hand corner of the carpet, in front of the sofa, and remained glued there. My carpet, to be sure, is nothing out of the ordinary, and deliberately following the direction of her eyes and gazing at the same bit of carpet, I realized that the nap was a trifle worn. I thought to myself:

"Until I buy another carpet, it would be better to turn this one around, so that the worn corner won't show quite so much."

And immediately following this domestic reflection came another:

"The lady, obviously, has something on her mind that she wishes to say to me, and doesn't know how to begin. And so, instinctively, from the habit she has of praising a house or a study or a room the first time she sees it, she makes use of these words, whereas, as a matter of fact, she really cannot have noticed whether it is charming or ugly."

(And here, I beg you to make note of my consummate skill as a novelist. A novice would at once bluntly have stated that Signora Marta had never been in my study before. I, on the contrary, by the preceding observation and the nonchalant remark, "The first time she sees it," have given you to understand, without appearing to do so, that it was the first time Signora Marta had been to see me.

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By means of such devices as this, one obtains more telling effects and saves many words.)

After a moment or two of embarrassed silence on both sides, I, desiring to proceed as orderly and methodically as possible, endeavored to divert her gaze from that frayed fringe (not so frayed at that, mind you) of the red-colored carpet. I turned to her and remarked:

"Won't you take off your cloak?"

"No, thanks."

So saying, she raised her eyes toward me as I stood there. Then it was, her gaze fell upon a drawing of Sironi's, a picture showing a set of marks for target-practice. She did not know what they were, this being due either to her preoccupied mood or to the fact that she was not versed in marksmanship, which was quite understandable in view of her sex; and so far as that goes, the same thing is true of many of the opposite sex.

So, she asked me:

"What are those things?"

While I was answering her question, my own thoughts, with that habit I have of calmly going on about my business quite independently of what I may be saying or doing—my own thoughts, as I say, were taken up with trying to guess what it was that Signora Marta Calabieri wanted of me.

Bent upon proceeding in proper and exact order, I rapidly ran through a mental card-catalogue of all the various sorts of reasons which could induce a lady to come to see me. I found the following:

1. Poetesses, lady-novelists or the like, having manuscripts to offer to some newspaper, magazine or publishing house (depending on the bulk);

2. ditto, ditto, who, having published a book, want to have it reviewed;

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3. concert-players, wanting letters of introduction to one of my musical friends;

4. the possessors of autograph-albums who beg me to write them "a little thought, a verse or two, anything you like—"

5. very strong personal attraction.

I quickly ruled out the first three reasons, for I knew perfectly well that Signora Marta had reached the age of thirty-five (see title of Chapter One) without literary or artistic leanings of any sort, and that her only concerns were her house, her husband, charity-benefits, visiting with women friends, and a few other equally innocent pursuits.

I likewise excluded reason number 4, since I already had written something in the lady's album.

Lastly, I excluded reason number 5, and not from modesty, but because I knew that Signora Calabieri, due to that mental inertia which distinguishes respectable women from the pleasing kind, felt no strong personal attraction for anyone but her husband, Calabieri. And I had not seen her for three or four months.

After all these exclusions, a sort of mental anxiety began to take possession of me. I began to be afraid that, at any moment, Signora Marta might open her mouth and reveal her secret to me. I was afraid, for the reason that I had got the idea firmly fixed in my mind that I must guess the truth before she told it to me. This attempt at speed, however, merely had the effect, for me, of draining the well of fancy dry.

Finally, feeling as cracked and empty as an old walnut shell, I gazed at her intensely. She was conscious of the look I gave her, lifted her own eyes for a moment, then dropped them again and said, with a tearful sigh:

"I am so unhappy!"

CHAPTER THE THIRD

A Pair of Imbeciles

"We are two, two we were."

D'ANNUNZIO, *The Light under the Bushel*.

A pause.

Signora Marta, spurred on by my silence and being no longer able to retrace her steps, blurted out:

"My husband is deceiving me."

I gave myself a mental thwack on the head, and involuntarily exclaimed: "Imbecile!"

And here it is, the misunderstanding takes place. (In every self-respecting novel or drama of adventure, there must, at a certain point, be a misunderstanding.

Occasionally, this is fundamental, and the whole plot of the novel depends upon it. At other times, it takes a secondary place, not being essential to the development of the drama or the novel. In our case, it is a secondary and not an essential misunderstanding).

The misunderstanding is this: I had been turning over in my mind the above energetic apostrophe. I had known for a long time that Signora Marta was fearfully jealous of her husband, and that, from time to time, she had talked to pretty nearly all her friends about her jealous spells. Seeing her come to me, so unexpectedly and in such a manner, I ought at once to have understood that her visit was connected with this little shortcoming of hers, in place of wasting my time in so many idle conjectures.

That is why that word slipped out:

"Imbecile!"

It was I who was the imbecile, as a matter of fact.

Unfortunately, the lady did not understand. She believed my outburst to be a response to her own

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confession, a synthetic and intelligent opinion voiced by me on her husband's conduct: "My husband is deceiving me"—"Imbecile!" Her husband being the imbecile. And while I, in my heart, already was cursing myself for my inopportune ejaculation, she was actually feeling grateful to me for regarding as an imbecile a husband who could deceive a woman like herself. She interpreted it as a spontaneous and involuntary compliment. She smiled, a wan little smile, full of heart-felt gratitude, sighed once more, and said:

"I have the evidence."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

5 Overwhelming Hairs

"Ma foi, sans aller chez le notaire, voilà le certificat de mon cocuage."

MOLIÈRE, *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*, sc. IV.

I was thunderstruck.

"The evidence? Is it possible?!"

"Yes, the evidence. This morning, when brushing his coat, I found this."

She took from her muff a rather large bag, and from this a smaller purse, and from the smaller purse a couple of keys, a tiny box of facepowder, a handkerchief, a five-lire note and a small package. She deposited all the things upon the sofa, and with a dramatic air, showed me the package. Then she opened it slowly, and took from it a little sheaf of five or six hairs, which she at once drew through her fingers and waved in the air—five or six long hairs, a woman's hair.

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"You found that little package in your husband's pocket?"

"No, worse. I found these hairs,—not one, but five!—not *in* but *on* my husband's coat, right here—see—here—"

She had risen and, coming close to me, pointed menacingly with the forefinger of her left hand (since she was holding the five hairs in her right hand) to the shoulder of my coat near the lapel—a critical spot, indeed, the spot where loved ladies love to lay their fond heads in the course of tender embraces.

The five hairs were, indeed, evidence.

And the evidence was overwhelming.

(By way of completing the syllogism).

I could think of nothing to say. She, falling back a step and still gazing upon the *corpus delicti*, repeated:

"Not one but five!"

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

Written in Dialogue Form, to Speed Up the Dramatic Movement.

"Trifles, light as air,
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs from holy writ"

SHAKESPEARE, *Othello*, Act III.

I seized upon the pretext, with the idea of endeavoring to make her a little more forgiving:

"Oh, well, madam, whether it's five or one, the fact remains the same."

SIGNORA MARTA (woe-begone)—I know it.

I (trying to gain ground)—Well, then, look here, is it worth while, seeing that five is the same as one—

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is it worth while to give so much importance to a hair—a single hair found on the shoulder of one's husband's coat?—not your husband's shoulder, mind you, but the shoulder of his coat...

SIGNORA MARTA (without paying any attention to me, rises and crosses the study diagonally, effecting an ideal conjunction, with the movement of her body, between the corner devoted to my "Writers of Italy" set and the corner where my sawdust-stove stands).

I (to occupy the time, while following her with my eyes, am seeking for a philosophic solution for that unexpected cosmic connection between the classics of my own tongue and a contrivance intended for the consumption of sawdust).

SIGNORA MARTA (coming to a standstill in front of me, resolutely) I have come to ask you to help me.

I—By doing what?

SHE (dramatically) By finding the woman.

I (idiotically) The woman?...

SHE—Yes, the woman—the one to whom those hairs belong (squeezing them in her fist, as she raises it to the ceiling). These hairs ought to enable you to find her.

I—But there are not enough of them.

SHE—Not enough? Not enough? What do you think the hussy ought to have done?—Left all her hair on my husband's shoulder?—

I—I am not saying that. But five hairs are not enough to give any idea of a whole head of hair.

SHE—They are enough. Besides, look at the color: deep chestnut, horribly dyed—with henna—do you see?—can't you see the henna?—and the cheapest sort of henna, at that. Do you follow me?

I (obligingly)—I'm afraid I don't—quite.

SHE—But these disgusting hairs are an invaluable clue. Do you see why? No? Then I'll tell you. If this lady's hair is in the habit of falling out that

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way, in handfuls, by the bale, it is ev-i-dent that this woman has recently had the Spanish "flu".

I (dumbfounded) That's true !

SHE—Therefore you, who are my husband's friend and who are easily in a position to find out something about his habits, should be able to discover a woman whom he has been calling on these last few days, a woman with chestnut hair dyed with henna, and who has recently had the Spanish "flu." (She waits for a reply.)

I (after a pause) Well—and what then?

SHE—Ah! haven't you any imagination? Why then, I shall know what I have got to do with the two of them.

I—Good gracious me! Don't be so heartless, Signora Marta. Just think—a lady convalescing from that deadly disease, who, perhaps, has even been with one foot in the grave (I stop short, realizing that I am acting like an incredible moron).

SHE—Don't talk nonsense now, but tell me, frankly—will you help me see that justice is done?

I (who am never able to say no; fate luckily made me a he-man) If it will make you feel a little easier—I might try... (A pause).

SHE (flopping into a seat on the sofa) I already feel not quite so unhappy as I did.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

At Fazio's Bar

"There's need to think this over."

B. CROCE, *"Aesthetics as the Parenetics of Ethics."*

Signora Marta gave me a tram-ticket which she

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had found in the cuff of her husband's overcoat, in case it might be of assistance in my search. She made me take another good look at the five hairs, but would not let me have them. She went off with my half-hearted promise. I dined and then went out. I was careful to take the tram indicated on the ticket, a very ordinary sort of tram, and one which I at once realized would not let me off in the right street. I found myself in the Piazza della Scala, at the bar next door to the pharmacy. Then I remembered, all at once, that Calabieri frequently came here for his coffee. In fact, I found him there. My first inner feeling was one of confusion—was I not, possibly, preparing to betray him? But I quickly shook myself out of it. Calabieri talked about one thing or another. At a certain point in the conversation, I, perfidiously but gracefully as I could, edged in the traitorous query:

"How is it I have not seen you for some little time? Where were you last evening?"

It seemed to me as though his face clouded for a moment, and that he fumbled a bit before replying.

"Last evening? Oh!—I stayed home."

"How was that?" I persisted.

"Because—Oh! because someone came in—"

"Who?"

"What's his name—eh!—Garbagnarini."

And he at once began talking about something else. In his annoyed manner, in his reticence, in that name intentionally thrown out, I sensed a lie—a whole pack of lies. Obviously, Calabieri did not care to tell me how he had spent the evening. Signora Marta's suspicions, then, were well founded. Poor lady! From that moment on, I had no further scruples; my mission impressed me as being a sacred one. I resolved, for the first time, that I would see the thing through, if it were possible. But how?

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

Garbagnarini

"Si l'espine nou picque quand nai
A peine que pique jamai"
Old proverb of Dauphiny.

The first thing to do was to show up the lie. To find Garbagnarini. The business of the hairs must, undoubtedly, have occurred the evening before, seeing it was this morning that Signora Marta had found them while brushing her husband's coat. I must, therefore, accurately reconstruct Calabieri's evening, and begin my investigations by finding out clearly what was true and what was false in his statements. A certain negligence on that first head had led me goodness knows where, but far from the truth.

I at once left Calabieri. By means of a cab, an automobile and a couple of tramways, and having frisked, one after another, four of the leading cafés, three second-rate ones, several bars, two theatre foyers, a cinema lobby and that synthetic nucleus of all the cafés, taverns, bars, theatres, cinemas and other places of public amusement, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele,—after all this, I succeeded, a little after midnight, in meeting up with Garbagnarini, and accosted him with an air of innocence that was really an inspiration.

"Well, what are you doing in these parts?"

After a series of tactical twistings and turnings, I succeeded in ascertaining from Garbagnarini:

—that the previous evening he had gone to have coffee with Calabieri (Ah! so the husband had not lied!) but that he had left early (Ah! ha!) because he had grown tired of the caresses and reproaches with which Signora Marta, alternately and at the opportune moment, had worried her husband (as is

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her custom), paying no attention to their guest and greatly embarrassing the latter (it is always like that). He had gone off about 9:30, leaving them to their bickerings.

It came to me in a flash!

When they had been left alone, Signora Marta, in all probability, had thrown a scene with her husband. It was still early. The husband, at a certain point, being able to stand it no longer, had gone out.

And he had gone out **LOOKING FOR REVENGE!**

Allowing ten minutes for the preliminaries of the scene, ten for the scene itself, five more for him to make up his mind to go out, and five as a margin, it would be just half an hour that had elapsed between the time that Garbagnarini and Calabieri, respectively, went out.

Calabieri left the house, then, at ten o'clock. My investigations were to be confined to that portion of the night which followed.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

In the World of Chimeras

"Causes of dreams are the arts, business, work and all trades and traffic that are constantly carried on, with care and solicitude."

PASSAVANTI, *The Mirror of True Repentance.*

I at the same time, however, found myself facing a difficult situation. Calabieri, in all probability, had

gone out, not with any definite aim or with the object of keeping a definite appointment, but rather, on the impulse of the moment, following an occurrence that he could not have foreseen (the previous departure of Garbagnarini) and one less unforeseeable but, in actual seeming, always unexpected (a domestic scene).

All this led me to presume that the accomplice of his revenge, the object of my search, the owner and generous distributor of the henna-dyed hairs, was not a, let us put it, friend he had looked up, but one whom poor Signora Marta's husband had come upon by chance somewhere after ten o'clock.

That was a bit repulsive. And furthermore, it rendered my investigations more difficult if not impossible. The fellow was hiding behind a set of nasty circumstances, such as made more difficult still a task that was difficult enough in itself. I accordingly decided, *a priori*, to put this last hypothesis aside, and to begin the following day by taking accurate stock of all the women with whom Calabieri could be acquainted, who had hair of this color, and who had had the Spanish "flu".

With this purpose in mind, I went to sleep, and had a confused dream, in the course of which I saw, descending from the sky, five preternaturally long chestnut hairs streaming down over the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, which was incessantly turning around and around, while astride the four arms of the Galleria were four ladies, who naturally were being swept along on the whirligig, all of them with disheveled brown hair.

One of them, I saw at once, was Signora Marta, but I did not succeed in recognizing the other three. I tried desperately to go over to them, but Garbagnarini was holding me back, at the door of Fazio's bar. I suddenly wrenched myself free of him; but there on the ground before me was a tram-ticket,

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which I could neither straddle over nor get around. Raising my anguished eyes, I perceived that the Galleria had disappeared, but the five hairs were still there, writhing and whizzing and rushing upon me like a whirlpool, as though to engulf and suffocate me in their coils.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

From Door to Door

"From the imperceptible all perceptible things derive at break of day; at nightfall, they dissolve into the so called imperceptible."

BHAGARAVGITA, *reading* 8.

This dream did not enlighten me much as to what I had yet to do. But as soon as I was awake, I dressed myself quickly and began drawing up a list of all the ladies whom I knew that Calabieri knew, jotting down opposite the name of each those facts that impressed me as being pertinent.

There were seven in all. Here is the list:

1. Lady Luisa X***—fifty years old (set down as a matter of course).
2. The Marchesa Salviati—don't remember the color of her hair. Has had the "flu". (Must have a look at her.)
3. Grazia—eighteen-years-old; father and mother teachers; plays tennis, plays Chopin, paints pastels, looking for a husband. (Matter of course.)
4. Leonilde—has been six years in Milan studying singing. Chestnut hair. Hasn't had the Spanish "flu." (Have a look at her.)

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5. Signora A*** B***—Chestnut hair. Has had the Spanish "flu." (Have a look.)

6. The wife of Garbagnarini—died a year ago. (As a matter of course.)

7. Signorina Vera Chetchni Korvski—Very blond. (Matter of course.)

I ruled out, as a matter of course and the result of an immediate intuition, Numbers 1, 3, 6 and 7, deciding that my search must be confined to Numbers 2, 4 and 5, the only possible ones.

It was now Monday.

I gave up the rest of the day to getting some rest and collecting my wits about me as best I could, resolving to devote Tuesday to the Marchesa, Wednesday to Leonilde, and Thursday to Signora A*** B***.

Tuesday. — Disappointment. The Marchesa Salviati is blond. (Half-an-hour's visit. The little Marchesa Salviati, aged nine, recited for me a touching poem by Giovanni Bertacchi.)

Wednesday. — Leonilde has had the Spanish "flu." She was once chestnut-haired, but now she is blonde as an ear of corn in June. (She keeps up her singing. Rambling on about one thing or another, she kept me amused all day Wednesday and, to be continued in our next, a part of

Thursday.—to such an extent that, along about noon, I went home to take a nap, and as a result, had to put off my third call for another day.)

Friday.—This was the last hope, but Signora A*** B***, was, at the same time, the one that looked to me like the best bet. I knew she was chestnut-haired, and I knew she had had the Spanish "flu." My heart was thumping as I climbed her stairs.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

The Servant of the B*** Household

"Ah!"

LUIGI LUZZATTI, *Complete Works*.

At this point, I might prolong my reader's attention by describing analytically my state of mind, as I felt the arduous solution of the problem drawing near. I might depict, with minute and florid details, the stairs, the windows, the landing, the door, the bell, the man-servant and the antechamber of Signora A*** B***, indulging in pretty philosophic comparisons of my state of mind before and after ringing the bell... Instead of which, I prefer to be abrupt, to avoid all procrastination, to sacrifice all effect, and to hit the reader straight in the eye, by telling him quickly, brutally, heartlessly what was told me quickly, brutally, heartlessly by the aforesaid man-servant: namely, that Signora A*** B*** (the chestnut-haired one who had had the Spanish "flu," and whom it seemed to me I already held tight in my fist, ready to carry as a burnt-sacrifice piping-hot to Signora Marta) —Signora A*** B*** had left Milan a month ago.

So, she could not be the one.

Even she had failed me.

Thus, in less than a minute, I saw annihilated, by a few cold syllables languidly uttered by an unfeeling servant, the result of all my irksome labors of a week past.

And what a wretched figure I should cut in the eyes of Marta, the unhappy lady who, no doubt, had been counting to the beats of her own heart the minutes, hours and days of that week of anguish.

What am I to say to her?

She will think that I have not worked on the case, or perhaps, that I have become the accomplice of that husband who so unworthily has betrayed her.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

The Burnt-Offering

According to the seasonal reckoning, the week coincides with the moon, but remains apart in the Bears.

HERACLITUS, *fragment 126.*

I was tempted for a moment to go to her and invent some story, to create some sort of woman for the purpose who had left the day before... But my conscience at once reproached me, and led me to decide upon a better solution: that of candidly telling the truth—the pains I had been to and the disappointments I had met with, the failure that had crowned my efforts.

I encouraged myself in this virtuous decision all the rest of that day. The day following, I set out at an hour when I was sure of finding her alone.

I realized, at once, that my presence disconcerted her. It was natural. I myself did not know how to begin, and so, proceeded to give such a turn to the conversation that she would be in the position of having to question me.

"It's several days since I saw you—not since that day—that I had the pleasure of receiving you in my study."

"Oh, yes—your study is very nice—I remember some painted things—what were they?—they looked like arrows."

"Shooting-targets."

"Ah, yes."

An embarrassed silence on both sides. At last:

"I have something to return to you."

I took my pocketbook from my pocket, and from this the tramway-ticket which she had given me, and which I had been very careful to keep. She succeeded

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(what unlikely little tricks will women not be up to?) in taking it in such a manner that I could not make out whether or not she was taking it, whether or not she recognized it, whether she was acting in a state of consciousness or in a trance. I only know that, in a minute's time, the ticket had disappeared, magically, without my realizing how.

But by now, the ice was broken, and I went through. I talked, talked at length, telling her of all my efforts and all my disappointments, confessed myself beaten. She was examining, very attentively, a lacework handkerchief which she held in her hand. Having said my say, I was silent. Signora Marta herself had been silent for some little while.

After a bit, she raised her head. I was trembling all over as I waited. She uttered the words:

"Will you have a cup of tea?"

I staggered for a second. Then I rose, drew myself up to my full height, and said:

"No, thanks, I have an appointment."

"I'm sorry. Excuse my not coming with you to the door. I'm not quite strong yet; you know, I have just had the Spanish 'flu'..."

A flash of lightning shot through the room, filling it with an intense and fugitive glow. I cried out:

"You have had the 'flu'?"

"Yes, more than a month ago, but—you see how it is—I'm still a little weak."

"But you—you—"

I paused and looked at her hair. I came nearer to her in order to have a good look at it. She let me do so, with bent head. Her face had turned crimson. I persisted:

"Yours, yours—they were yours!"

Shamefacedly, she murmured:

"Yes."

"When did you find it out?"

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"The next day. That day I was a little mad. Will you forgive me? Can you forgive me? And would you mind if we drop the subject?"

I was still utterly bewildered.

But she felt there was forgiveness in my voice as, having already grown a little calmer, I murmured:

"Why, at any rate, did you not telephone me at once?"

Signora Marta Calabieri blushed once more, ever so slightly, stood for a moment in some perplexity, and then immediately pounced upon an excuse, so plausible a one that I did not venture a word in reply:

"I called you three or four times, but wasn't able to get the number."

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

Ending

This novel has no ending, having no need of one.

(Translated from the Italian by Sommerville Story.)

THE SOWERS

by

Gabriele d'Annunzio.

*The strength of youth strides down the waiting field,
Guiding the calm-faced oxen, and after it,
The gleaming furrow opens, ready, fit
To receive the seed of crops that time may yield.
The elders raise their arms, and bravely wield
A significance of gesture, as, bit by bit,
The seed drops in the soil, while the old men sit
And dream of harvestings, as God's their shield.*

*It is as though a new and struggling birth
Of human consciousness had touched the earth
Today, as in the modesty of light,
The mountains' templed snows rise to the night,
While softly lifts the song of working men;
An upraised hand, earth has its priests again.*

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

DREAM

(but perhaps not)

by

Luigi Pirandello.

A bedroom : but perhaps not : a drawing room.

Definitely, a young woman is lying upon a bed : but perhaps not : it would seem to be, rather, a divan, the tall back of which may be let down by a series of notches.

In any event, nothing is clearly to be made out at the beginning, for the reason that the room is barely illuminated by an unnatural light resting on the floor, which from one moment to another threatens to disappear, at a slight stirring of the young woman in her sleep.

It is, as a matter of fact, a dream-light : just as this drawingroom is a bedroom only in the young woman's dream : and that divan a bed.

In the wall at the back is an open door. In the right wall is a large mirror, over a very small table artistically constructed in the form of a gilded chest. This table, for the present, is not visible : and the mirror, likewise, seems to be for the present, rather, a window.

The explanation of this false impression is a simple one : in the mirror is a reflection of the window opposite, in the left wall : and naturally, in a dream, that which is merely a reflection becomes the thing itself. For the young woman who is doing the dreaming, the window is there where its mirrored reflection is : and this dream-window, indeed, is to be opened a little later,

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by the gentleman who is to come upon the scene.

Under the mirror is lying, for the moment, the tapestry which then will cover the surface of the little table. This tapestry is of the same material as the walls of the room, from which it is scarcely distinguishable. Lying thus, it serves to conceal the void into which, in the course of the dream, the table has disappeared, eventually to reappear with its tapestry upon it, when the dream is at an end, and the mirror shall have become a mirror once more.

There hangs from the ceiling a chandelier with three rose-hued globes, now dimmed, of polished glass.

In the darkness, which is barely if at all dispersed by that dream-light, at a certain point, there emerges from under the divan that serves as a bed a hand, an enormous hand, which slowly raises the dropped back of the couch; and gradually, with the rising movement of the back, there comes forth after it a similarly enormous head, the head of an anguished-appearing man, with disheveled hair, wrinkled forehead and a pair of eyes that are frightfully gloomy, and hard with a sombre menace.

It is a terrible nightmare-like mask of a face.

The figure keeps on rising, halfway down to the waist, displaying evening attire under a black cloak and white silk scarf: it bends over the young woman, who by now has opened her eyes, and who lifts her hands protectingly, only to sink back thoroughly terrified.

The light on the floor goes out, and the head disappears behind the back of the divan. There is a moment's pause. The three globes in the chandelier light up, and give forth a very mild

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and tenuous rose light: when behold, upright on his feet in front of the divan is the gentleman in the dress suit, no longer wearing the enormous nightmare-like mask in which he had previously appeared, but of normal proportions now, yet not so normal as to give him an appearance of reality, but rather a dreamed aspect, with the same expression of sombre menace, which has become, so to speak, lifelike.

The scene which is to follow, constantly changing, as though suspended in the inconsistency of a dream, will be interrupted all along by pauses of varying duration, as well as by certain sudden haltings of the performance, in the course of which the man in the dress suit not only will cut short the gesture he is about to make, but will abandon all expressive movement of eyes, face and figure, remaining there like a puppet, rooted to the spot. He will come out of these pauses each time by assuming, of a sudden, expressions which are in violent contrast with his former ones, in accordance with that novel aspect and new mind-state which the young woman fashions of him for herself, as her memories go wandering in the fluttering incoherence of her dream.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Who are you? How did you get in?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*he stands motionless at first: then barely turns to look at her: takes out of a small pocket in his waistcoat, unbuttoned at the top, a shiny little latchkey and shows it to her: then puts it back in his pocket*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Ah, you've found that? Just as I suspected. When I asked you for it, after your last indiscretion...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*smiles*)

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THE YOUNG WOMAN: Why do you smile?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*suddenly ceases smiling and gives her a dark look, by way of letting her understand that it is of no use to lie to him, or to try to make him believe that the key had been taken from him "after your last indiscretion"*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*frightened again but overcoming the perturbation which his glance arouses in her*): I had no other reason in asking you for it. It meant so little to me that I dropped it into my pocket, without thinking anything about it. It must have dropped out of my pocket onto the rug, when I got up—the maid had called me away for a moment.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*she no sooner turns her head to one side, by way of accompanying with a gesture the words "away for a moment," than he, with the rapidity of a thief, performs the imagined act: that is to say, bends down over the rug as though to pick up a key and hide it at once in the exact spot whence we have seen him produce it, the small pocket of his waistcoat. As he performs this act, his eyes light up with a malign smile, which also curls over his lips. He has no sooner straightened up again than he at once resumes his former attitude, as though he had never moved.*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*after waiting a moment for him to say something*) May I inquire what is the matter? Why do you look at me like that?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: What is the matter? Nothing at all. What do you mean, look at you like that? (*as he says this, he comes over to her: bends over her, placing a knee upon the divan, one hand upon the backrest and the other, delicately, upon her forearm*). I cannot bear being separated from you; I cannot go on living unless I feel you like this, like this, near me, unless I can smell the perfume of your hair—that intoxicating perfume—and that sweet odor

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of your skin—and that fragrance which comes from your whole body. You are all, all that life...

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*leaps to her feet and flings past him. She is showing him how unbearable it is to her to hear him go on repeating a lover's customary speeches. Nevertheless, it is she herself who has caused him to indulge in these speeches, as she is aware, when she for a moment recalls how many times the love-lorn wretch has appeared before her with that altered and disheveled aspect which but now, in her dream, is causing her so much fright. Repenting suddenly of her outburst, she waits for him, with the proof before him that she no longer loves him, to pretend that he has spoken in a jest. And so, frightened, she turns toward him*)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*who has been standing like an automaton, arrested in his enamored attitude; he now bends forward mechanically toward the spot where she had been sitting before, and as she turns ever so slightly to glance in his direction, throws himself rudely down upon the divan, arms and legs apart and head tossed back, bursting into a loud and scornful laugh as he does so. As he laughs like this, the back of the divan slowly descends behind him, until it rests upon the lowest notch as before. Gradually also, the three globes in the chandelier lose their ruddy glow, as he, still laughing, comes to assume a supine position upon the now wholly lowered backrest; in the instant of darkness between the extinguishing of the three chandelier globes and the rekindling of the light on the floor, he turns over upon one side, to lie with his full length upon the back of the divan, which once more forms a bed, resting his weight upon an elbow and with his head supported by one hand, as though he had been lying thus for a long time; he at once, with a wry smile upon his lips and a voice that has grown calm, enters*

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upon a speech addressed to the young woman, who is now seated upon the divan at his feet)... certainly, neither a woman can oblige a man nor a man a woman to respond to a love that is no longer there. But then, one ought to have the frankness to say: 'I do not love you any more.'

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So many times, one does not say it, out of sympathy: not from any lack of frankness, when frankness might be still more convenient.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: It may also be more convenient to a woman to feel that she is keeping still out of sympathy. When a woman says that she is keeping still out of sympathy she has already begun to deceive.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: That is not so!

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes—she would not be herself, otherwise. Under that sympathy of hers there is always concealed something that she can turn to account.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*rising*): Thanks for the fine opinion you have of women.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: But if there were not something she could turn to account, would she not understand that sympathy is always false?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I have always felt that deceit might also be a matter of sympathy.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: What sort? You mean, conveying the impression of love when love is no longer there? A futile deceit, that. One who is truly in love is at once conscious when the other ceases to love, and woe to him if he pretends not to be conscious: that is as good as giving a lesson in treachery. A true sympathy, one that does not conceal its real motives, can be for the one who shows it only sympathy, no longer love. To pretend that it is, is to corrupt that sympathy. It can only give rise to scorn, that scorn which lures to and counsels

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treachery, for the reason that we ourselves, in the first place, have brought about that treachery through our unwillingness to recognize the deceit involved.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*turning to sit down where she had been seated before*) Then you think one ought to speak out?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*without losing his composure*) Yes. Loyalty.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: For the reason that deception, even when inspired by sympathy, is a betrayal?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes. When man or woman accepts it as a beggar does alms. (*pause*) I should like to know how you would treat a beggar who, by way of showing his gratitude for the alms you had given him, should have the presumption to kiss you on the mouth, like a lover.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*with an ambiguous smile*) If the alms come from love, a kiss is the least which that beggar of yours could ask.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*scrambling to his feet on the other side of the divan and angrily raising the backrest to the position it occupied before*) I forgot that I was talking to a woman. (*Paces excitedly up and down the room*) Loyalty, loyalty is a duty, the most sacred duty that we have, toward ourselves as well as toward others. Betrayal is horrible. Betrayal is horrible.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I don't know why you should talk to me like that tonight, or why you should become so excited over what you say.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Not over what I say; over what you have said to me. I am speaking abstractly.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: But so was I, dear. You cannot doubt me.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: You know well enough that I always doubt, and that I have all the

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reason in the world to do so. (*he goes over, resolutely, to open the dream-window and let in an exaggerated ray of moonlight*) Don't you remember? (*he stands looking out of the open window*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*sits there looking straight ahead of her, like one lost in memories*) Ah yes, it's true, that summer, by the sea...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*still standing in front of the window, as though he could see the ocean from there*)... A whole shimmering expanse of silver under the moon...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, yes; we really were quite mad...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I said to you: we are tempting the sea by feeling so safe in this canoe, which a wave might send to the bottom at any moment.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: ...and you tried to frighten me, by rocking from side to side...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: And you remember what else I said to you then?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes. Something wicked.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: That I wanted you to experience the same fear that I felt in believing in your love. You took it badly. And I then tried to make you understand how, just as we two that night were tempting the sea by our feeling of security in that canoe, which the slightest wave might send to the bottom at any moment, so it seemed to me that I was tempting you, by telling you that I felt safe in what little confidence I was able to feel in your love.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Even then it seemed to you little enough?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes, indeed! It always has, my dear! It could not be otherwise. Through no will of yours. You thought that you could always give me every confidence. And it was

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always little enough, for the reason that you yourself, my dear, had no assurance that tomorrow, from one moment to another, you would still go on loving me. And yet, there was a moment when you felt that you loved me; and up to that time, I did not love myself. So, there will come a moment when you will feel that you do not love me any more, and I shall love myself no longer.—Perhaps that moment has come.—Look at me!—Why are you afraid to look at me?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I am not afraid. I know that you are reasonable. You said yourself, only a moment ago, that no one could force another to respond to a love that was no longer there.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes, that was talk. But woe be it if love in you should come to an end, while it still goes on in me, so strong and so alive!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I want you to be reasonable.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes, yes, be reasonable, be reasonable. I'll be as reasonable as you like, to please you. To avoid being frightened, you want evidence to the effect that I still have the full use of my reasoning powers? Well, then, look: I'll give it to you. I understand everything very well indeed, have no fear of that, so long as my spirit-flame stays lighted here (*touching his forehead*). I understand very well indeed, as you see, how it is that your love, which began in a moment, can also end in a moment, through some unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstance. What more do you want? I can only tell you: at the turning of a way, through some undreamed of encounter, through some sudden blinding mischance, through some unforeseen, unrestrainable conflagration of the senses...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, that...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Why not?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: For the reason that there

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is in us the power of reason, reason, reason, that suddenly calls us back.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: To what? To duty?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So that we may not let ourselves be taken like that.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Life takes us, life takes us: it has always taken us like that! Why must I tell you so, as if you yourself did not know it well enough? Woe be it if the flame is kindled here (*touching his breast*) and fires your heart! You have no idea what an atrocious smoke comes from a burning heart, from blood, from blood that is on fire, or what a horrible darkness that smoke suddenly creates in the brain: the tempest, for the one who no longer possesses the power of reason. Would you stand in the way of the tempest, hurling its thunderbolts, any one of which may burn your house and slay you? (*as he says this, his aspect becomes terrible: he has barely mentioned the tempest when a distant rumble, growing in volume, like that of a tempest, is heard through the open window, while the ray of moonlight changes into a livid, writhing flash of ominous light*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*thoroughly frightened, she hides her face with her hands*)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*as she hides her face, he suddenly breaks off, with suspended gesture and expressionless face, like an automaton. The rumble and flash at once cease; the moonbeam becomes tranquil once more, and all remains mysteriously immobile, until the young woman takes her hands down from her face*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*without removing her hands from her face, she rises and takes a step toward the window, to open it*)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*remaining rooted in his attitude of astonishment, he merely turns his head*

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and shoulders in her direction, as though she, in taking those few steps toward the window, through the power of attraction, had caused him so to turn)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*removing her hands from her face and looking out through the window, she also stands there, for a moment, stupefied by the serene immobility of the moonlight. In her stupor she smiles; she remembers the "moment" when she began to love this man; it was, precisely, in a drawing-room like this, beside a window through which the moonlight streamed. She turns to him with a smile upon her lips*)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*suddenly assumes the expression of that "moment", that is, of a gentleman who, in a drawing-room, out of the corner of his eye, has noticed the lady of whom he is enamored, going over to a window, and who, under pretense of getting a breath of air, follows her over and stands there as though surprised at the chance encounter*) Oh, excuse me! Are you here? It's really unbearably hot. One can't dance any more. It might be better if we were all to go down into the garden, under that fine moon: but let someone stay here to play for us: we can hear the music from a distance and dance in the open air, in that glade yonder, near that gushing pool. (*from a distance, dimly, as though from above, the sound of a piano*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I thought the garden and that moonlight you speak of might have made you want to go down there, not with the others, but alone with that pretty girl in the red dress with whom you have been dancing so much this evening.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Why do you say that? It was you...

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*interrupting him*) Not so loud! They can hear us.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*guardedly and in a*

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low tone)... it was you who told me not to insist upon our dancing together, so that we would not be too conspicuous; and now you reprove me...

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*she at first makes him a sign to be still, and then whispers to him, very softly*) Go on down into the garden without letting anyone see you. I'll slip down to you just as soon as I can.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*after a quick glance around to be sure that no one in the room is looking, he joyfully takes her hand and kisses it furtively*) Very well. I'll wait for you. Don't be long. (*he moves away from the window and cautiously makes his way through the drawing-room in the direction of the closed door; there, he circumspectly glances about, as though waiting for the opportune moment to open the door; he opens it and goes out*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*she stands there, half hidden in the depths of the window, enveloped in moonlight. Little by little, this moonlight goes out, along with the light on the floor, while the sound of the piano becomes ever feebler and more distant, for the reason that the vision of that "moment" is slowly being extinguished within her. When it is wholly extinguished, and the sound of the piano along with it, in the moment of darkness which precedes the relighting of the three chandelier globes, the window is to be closed again, and the young woman is to go back and take her seat upon the divan where she before sat*)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*motionless, in front of the divan, with his former darkly menacing look, the one he wore in the beginning*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*after having waited for him to make up his mind to speak, stamping a foot*) But come, tell me something, you are going to tell me something. Don't think for a moment that you are going to stand there in front of me all night with

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that frown on your face! (*as she says this, she is almost weeping from anguish and repressed rage*)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I am not myself: it was you who put that frown there. You know very well that I am still deeply in love with you: you know very well that if, at this moment, I were to turn and look at myself in the glass, as you see me now, I should not recognize myself. The glass would tell me the truth, even if it gave me an appearance that I did not recognize, the one that you have given me. And that is why it is you have done away with a mirror and have let me open it like a window.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*almost screaming*) No, no, it is the window! It is the window! I swear to you that it is the window! It is no use for you to turn to look!

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Don't worry, I am not turning. It is the window, we will grant. I was convinced it was the window, the moment I found I could open it! And it may be that is not the garden down there, where for the first time our lips met in an interminable kiss? And that is not the sea there before us, which we together tempted that moonlight night in summer?—Nothing terrifies an uneasy conscience more than a mirror.—And you know that, for other reasons, which also happen to be dependent upon you—when I think of what I've done and am about to do for you—I do not dare lift my eyes to a mirror. And at this moment, at this very moment, as I stand here before you, you know well enough where I am—you came there once—in that yellow cardroom at the Club—and I am cheating, cheating for your sake—no one notices it, as it happens—but I am cheating, cheating to be able to make you a present of that pearl necklace...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, no, I don't want it any

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more! I don't want it any more! I merely told you that I should be so glad to have it...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: To drag me down.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, to make you think that I was demanding too much of you.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: You keep on lying! The truth is, it was not that you wanted to inspire in me a secret scorn for your excessive demands; you rather wanted to give me to understand that you were meant to have a wealthier lover than I, one who might easily have given himself the pleasure of satisfying your extravagant whims.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: O my God, that; you might have known that yourself, from the beginning, knowing who I was, and how life always works out!

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: You, too, knew who I was, when you threw your lot in with mine. I was never rich. I strove in every way I could to find the means of keeping up with you on your scale of life, without putting you out too much, and without demanding too many sacrifices of you. I have done all that for you, which you (if you would be sincere for a moment) ought to have suspected.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, I have suspected it—

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Subterfuges of all sorts...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Suspected—suspected—and also admired the way in which you succeeded in hiding all your embarrassments.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: It was for the reason that it all seemed to me as nothing—the least that I could do, in return for all the recompense that you gave me in permitting yourself to be loved by me.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: And yet, you have been insisting that I take into consideration...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: No! What?

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THE YOUNG WOMAN: What do you mean, no? You have appealed to my sincerity!—that I take into consideration how much it cost you.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I have told you, nothing: just as I hoped it would cost you nothing to give up your more extravagant whims.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: In order not to force you into expenditures which I knew you could not afford. And I have given up, indeed, I have given up—you cannot imagine how many things!

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I can imagine, I can imagine only too well!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: It seemed a natural thing to you?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes, being in love with me...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I was furious about it!

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Because it seemed natural enough to me?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes. The idea that, being in love with you, I ought not to want anything else! And then, deliberately, that evening, as I went past the window of that jewelry-store—deliberately, yes deliberately, I wanted to be cruel.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: And you think I was not aware of it?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Did I impress you as being cruel?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: No. Woman.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*striking her knee with her fists, and rising*) You keep it up! Can't you understand that it's your fault, the fault of you men, if women are what they are; that it is due to that opinion which you have of them? That it is your fault if they are cruel; your fault, if they deceive you; your fault, if they betray you?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Easy—easy... Why

THIS QUARTER

do you get into such a temper about it? Do you think I can't see that you are merely looking for an excuse, trying to find a way out for yourself at any cost?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*whirling upon him, in astonishment*) I?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*without losing his countenance*) Yes—you.—What are you so astonished about?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*embarrassed*) Way out of what?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: You know very well out of what.—I said "*woman*" to offset that "*cruel*" of yours. It impressed me as being *fitting*, not *cruel*, that you, on that evening, as you passed that jewelry-store window, at once wantonly and seriously, should have given a sigh of greediness (*he goes through the motions, like an infant in front of a dainty morsel of food, accompanying his sigh with the gesture which infants ordinarily make when they want something that causes their mouths to water, that is, rubs his hands rapidly up and down over his stomach*)—"Ah! How I should love to have that pearl necklace."

(*She smiles, and of a sudden, while she is smiling, it becomes dark, absolutely dark; and in this darkness, the chest which will have been noticed from the beginning, along the back wall and near the open door, will let down, by means of wires or other contrivance, a pair of its panels, which are to be of painted cardboard and so attached as to be easily removable; and then, powerfully illuminated from above by means of a reflector which isolates it from all the rest of the scene, there will become evident what appears to be a gorgeous jeweler's window, with many jewels unnaturally dis-*

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played; among these, in the center and easily visible, artfully set off against a satin background, is the pearl necklace, likewise unnatural. At the very moment that this display window appears thus illuminated, like a fascinating vision, the Young Woman will cease laughing. The vision is to last for a long time, in a dead silence. Due to the isolating effect of the reflector, the two characters should not be visible. Moreover, they have their backs turned to the chest. The vision of that jeweler's window is solely for the audience's benefit. For the two characters, it is as though the window were directly in front of them.

At a certain point, a pair of masculine hands will be seen, but very white and slender ones, drawing back, as though from the interior of the shop, the curtains which form a background for the window, and cautiously taking down the pearl necklace. Then, before this vision has disappeared, the three rose-colored globes of the chandelier will light up again, and there will appear, motionless and standing where they were, the Man in The Dress Suit and The Young Woman, prey to a fascination which causes them to speak stiffly and in lowered voices, looking straight ahead all the while.)

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT : Do you want me to steal it?

THE YOUNG WOMAN : No, no. That flashed through my mind for a moment. I wouldn't ask it, I wouldn't ask it of you! As I've already told you, I've never shown the least desire to be cruel. I know very well that you cannot afford to make me a present like that, unless you steal it.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT : Oh, steal from others

THIS QUARTER

to buy it for you!—Which is what I've done! And now—do you see?—other hands—other hands have taken the pearl necklace out of the window—for you—and you know it—you know it (*at this point, he comes out of his rigid posture and turns upon her, terrible to behold*)—and you dare to tell me that you would no longer ask it of me! You have already betrayed me, vile creature! (*He seizes her by the arms, while she, frightened, rises to flee*) And I know who it is! I know who it is! Vile creature! Vile creature! (*he shakes her*) You've taken up again with your old lover, who's come back from Java a rich man! I've seen him! I've seen him! You still stay apart, but I've seen him!

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*who has been struggling to free herself from his grasp, and who now breaks away*): It is not true! It is not true! Let me go.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*seizes her again, throws her down upon the divan, bends over her, with his hands to her throat as though to strangle her*) It's not true? When I tell you that I've seen him, infamous one! You were expecting those pearls from him, while I am soiling my hands for you, cheating my friends at the Club, wretched woman, wretched woman, to please you, to satisfy your cruelty!

(*He stands above her as though to strangle her; she is already giving way under his ferocious clutch; all the lights waver; suddenly, they go out, as she dreams that she is being strangled to death by him. Absolute darkness, which should last the shortest fraction of time possible. There will be heard, during this instant of darkness, repeated blows on the closed door, exaggeratedly loud and sombre-sounding, unreal, like peals heard in a dream. Meanwhile,*

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the two panels of the chest will be raised again, the little table in the form of a gilded coffer will come forward with its tapestry upon it, and the mirror will turn into a true mirror, no longer holding the reflection of the window, for the reason that the latter, in the left wall, will now be open, with a beautiful ray of sunset light streaming through it; when, The Man in the Dress Suit having disappeared, the scene will once more be bathed in the limpid, tranquil light of day. Immediately, as this light appears, the knocks upon the door, however loud, sombre-sounding and unreal they may have been, will now become real, that is, low, discreet, and no longer so very distinct. At the same time, The Young Woman will be seen to awake from her dream and put her hands to her throat, conveying thus a sense of suffocation. She will draw long and painful breaths, expressive of the terror which she has experienced in her dream. Still stupefied by that dream, she will look about her, like one who with difficulty finds his bearings in a surrounding reality. She endeavors to rise from the divan, but sinks back to a sitting posture, for the reason that her legs have failed her; she hides her face in her hands for some little while. The three discreet knocks are once more heard at the door.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*getting to her feet, as though she had not clearly heard the knocks before; she stands listening intently for a moment before speaking*): Come in.

(*She goes over toward the open window, giving a dab to her hair. The butler comes in, bearing upon a tray a jewel-casket done up in*

THIS QUARTER

very fine paper and tied with silver cord. He starts to come over toward her. She stops him by saying) Leave it there.

(points to the table. The butler leaves the package upon a little table, bows and goes out, closing the door behind him. She remains at first where she is, as though suspicious. In that package is the precious gift she has been expecting. But her joy in receiving it is offset by the terror of her recent dream, and the threat which that dream holds for her, if the lover whom she has beheld in her dream, bending over her with so terrible an aspect, should really come to suspect her treason, the proof of which—there it is, on the table in front of her. She goes over now, hastily and in a manner furtively, to the table, as though to hide away the package. She takes it up and glances suspiciously for a moment in the direction of the closed door. Then, being no longer able to resist the temptation of having a look at the gift, she opens the package with nervous hands, then the casket, and first draws out from the latter a visiting card, reading the words which are written on it under the name; then, she draws out the pearl necklace; she looks at it, admires it, smiles; she presses it to her bosom with both her hands, half closing her eyes; she tries it on in front of the glass, putting it to her throat but without fastening it about her neck. Another knock is heard at the door. The Young Woman quickly takes the pearl necklace and, snatching up the visiting card from the table, opens a little drawer under the tapestry and hides everything there. Then she speaks, turning toward the door:)

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Who is it? (*to the butler, who brings in an ordinary card*) Show him in.

(*The Man who in the dream was in a dress suit now enters, following the butler, once more quite calm. He now wears afternoon dress of one sort or another, but we shall continue to refer to him as The Man in the Dress Suit.*)

Oh, my dear, come in, come on in. (*the butler bows and goes out, closing the door*).

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*after having kissed her proffered hand for a prolonged moment*) Have I kept you waiting?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*feigning the greatest indifference*) No, no... (*sits down upon the divan*) Can't you tell from my eyes that I have been sleeping?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*observing her*) No, really... (*softly*) You've been asleep? (*sits down*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, right here, for a moment... I felt sleepy all of a sudden.—Strange...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: ...Did you have a dream?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, no... It was only for a moment. But I must—I don't know—I must have had a start. (*Caresses her throat with her hand*) I... I suddenly felt as though I could not get my breath. (*smiles*) Will you please ring? We'll have tea.

(*he rises and goes over to press the electric button near the mirror. Then comes back and sits down*).

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I was afraid I was late. I was so put out about something. I'll tell you about it. (*the butler knocks at the door and enters*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN: You may serve tea. (*the butler bows and goes out*) Put out about what?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I wanted to surprise you.

THIS QUARTER

THE YOUNG WOMAN: *You surprise me? (bursts out laughing)*

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT *(ill at ease)* What are you laughing at?

THE YOUNG WOMAN *(continuing to laugh)* A surprise from you?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: So, you don't think there are any surprises that I can give you any more?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, dear. Anything is possible. But you know how it is, don't you? After two people have known each other for so long, surprises... And then, you said it in a tone of such affliction... *(imitating his tone and manner)* "I wanted to surprise you"... *(laughs again)*.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: That was because I was really very much put out.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Will you wager that I can't guess?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: What?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Wait a moment. Was it on your own account or mine that you were put out?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: On your account, and my own also, on account of the surprise that I wasn't able to give you.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Ah, I guessed it. Just to let you see that you can no longer surprise me. *(Goes over behind his chair, bends down with her two arms over his shoulders, without embracing him, but clasping her hands in front of him and bringing her face close to his)* What you wanted to give me was that pearl necklace?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I went into the jeweler's to buy it! *(then, suddenly surprised)*. But how did you know that it had been sold?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: That's all right, dear. This is once I was able to guess.

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THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: But how did you know?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, that was easy! How? Last night, as I went past the window, I noticed that it was no longer there.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: It was there at four o'clock! I saw it myself!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Ah, no, it was later than that when I went by, about seven, no later.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Strange. Because they told me it was sold only this morning.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Ah—you inquired, then?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I went in—I am telling you—to buy it. And I'm quite sure they said it was this morning.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*feigning an absolute indifference*) Who bought it? Didn't they tell you?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*without the faintest suspicion, without attaching the least importance to her question*) To a gentleman—they said. (*drawing her to him*) But excuse me; since you were able to guess that what I was put out about had to do with those pearls, it must be a sign that you were thinking of them.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, no...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Why no?—and that you were expecting me to bring them to you!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, *Dio*, I knew that you had been playing for a number of evenings at the Club, and that you had had an unbelievable streak of luck...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: That is true—and do you know why? (I am certain of it)—it was your showing you wanted those pearls that struck me, like a bright and shining flash—it was that helped me out and kept me from losing a single trick.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Did you win much?

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THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes, much. (*with unfeigned excitement*) And now, you are going to help me look for some other beautiful thing—beautiful, beautiful,—for you, something that will please you very much...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No! No!

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Yes—to make me forget my disappointment in not being able to please you this once.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, indeed, dear, I never once seriously thought of those pearls, of your giving them to me... It was merely a passing whim, that evening, as we went by... No, no, I'm going to be good.

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: I'm sure of it—I'm sure you are always good—so very good—to me. All I have won this evening is yours, yours by right, I can assure you of that: I owe it all to you.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So much the better! And I am better satisfied than ever to have it that way—I'm glad that I've helped you win, and that you were not able to get those pearls. Let's not talk any more about it, please, please. (*a knock is heard at the door, and the butler at once enters, bringing in the tea things upon a tray*) Here is the tea. Let's have tea.

(*the butler will deposit the tray upon a little low lacquer-work stand near the table, and will bring the stand over to the divan. Before he starts arranging the service, The Young Woman will say to him:*)

Leave it there. I will serve. (*the butler bows and goes out*).

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT (*his thoughts on something else, he starts to speak*) Oh, I say, have you heard? They tell me that someone has come back from Java...

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THE YOUNG WOMAN (*pouring the tea*) Yes, yes, I know...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Ah, so you've heard it, too?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, the other night. I don't remember who it was...

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: It seems that he has made a lot of money...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Cream or lemon?

THE MAN IN THE DRESS SUIT: Cream—thanks.

[CURTAIN]

(*Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.*)

DELTA

by

Eugenio Montale.

*To thee
I have willed the life drained
in secret transfusions, the life chained
in a coil of restlessness, unaware, self-angry.*

*When time leans on his dykes
then thine
be his allconsciousness
and memory flower forth in a flame
from the dark sanctuary, and shine
more brightly, as now, the rain over, the dragon's-
[blood
on the walls and the green against the branches.*

*Of thee
I know nothing, only
the tidings sustaining my going,
and shall I find
thee shape or the fumes of a dream
drawing life
from the river's fever boiling darkly
against the tide.*

*Of thee nothing in the grey hours and the hours
torn by a flame of sulphur,
only
the whistle of the tug
whose prow has ridden forth into the bright gulf.*

(Translated from the Italian by S. B. Beckett.)

PETRONIUS

by

G. A. Borgese.

The first effect that Petronius' satirical novel produces upon us is an oppressive one, an effect of ruins everywhere: crumbling bricks and archways, rubbish-heaps, weed-grown ditches; and standing at one side is the dense, unaerated bulk of the *Cena Trimalchionis*. Then, we achieve a little orientation; the vast open spaces begin to take on contours; and out of these fragments there arises an abstract architecture, a prose Colosseum.

All those who should read Petronius' works are now able to do so at their ease* This does not mean all novel-readers. Considerable courage is required to enable one to face the indecency of the subject-matter, and a good deal of imagination is necessary to reconstruct the setting.

When the reader is so equipped, all the obscenities lose their unpleasant odor and, along with it, their offensive character; they undergo a species of petrification, rising respectably to the level of Medusa-like caricatures, out of a style as archaic and baroque as one could well wish; all the fragments are caught up and given their place in a unity of the whole, the result being what might be termed a first and major example of the picaresque romance, while the author may be looked upon as a Roman Rabelais.

* Alluding to a new revision of Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo's Italian translation of Petronius.

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"The body of the whole work must have been seven or eight times the size of that portion of it which we possess today." So much for the proportions of the thing. A pair of wandering student roués, Encolpius and Ascyltos, in the company of the debauched sixteen-year-old Giton, are roaming the world in quest of adventure: such is the theme, an Odyssey of the untrammelled intelligence hand in hand with a candid immorality.

There is almost no one any longer who would question the paternity of the book, by denying that it is the work of Caius Petronius Arbiter, the *arbiter elegantiarum*, a character worthy of a Wilde, courtier, ironist and Nero's victim, whose portrait, together with an account of his death, is to be found in one of Tacitus' most provocative passages:

"His day was entirely given over to sleeping; at night, he attended to the necessities and the amenities of life... He was, at Nero's court, the arbiter of good taste, the one who determined all that was fine and delicate in that sumptuous milieu. And Tigellinus hated him... The Emperor, at that time, had gone to the Campania. Petronius, who was in the imperial entourage, received at Cumae an order to go no farther... He... opened his veins, then bound them up, and opened them once more; and all the while, he kept up an entertaining flow of conversation with those friends who had stayed behind to keep him company, speaking jestingly of things that were neither grave nor important; nor did he spend any time in listening to the maxims of the philosophers or precepts concerning the immortality of the soul, but gave ear, rather, to merry ditties and the lightest of light verse. It was his desire to feast and slumber, for the reason that death, even when forced upon one, appeared to him a perfectly natural thing. In his codicils there was to be found

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no fawning on Nero or Tigellinus; but setting down the names of striplings and prostitutes, he proceeded to give an account of all the imperial turpitudes, down to the most recent scandals. Then he signed the document and sent it on to Nero..."

Whatever the Latin-teachers may have to say, I cannot help feeling that these lines of Tacitus' may refer directly to the *Satyricon*. It is not hard to believe that, on his last night, Petronius may have copied out for Nero's benefit a portion of his novel, unknown to the Emperor as it is unknown to us, in which all the corruption of the court was depicted, intimately and without veils.

* * * * *

In those passages of Petronius which have come down to us, two traditional Roman virtues are to be discerned: patriotism, or at least a respect for the greatness that was Rome's; and courage, or to be more exact, a disdain of death.

As for the rest, it is not Roman but Babylonian. No distinction between normal and abnormal love, no reservations on the score of knavery and crime; the prime objective of life, and of all life's actions, is wealth; the ultimate objective is debauchery. Probably, while all the remainder has been lost, the *Cena Trimalchionis* has been preserved for the reason that it is the most characteristic portion of the work: pages literally crammed, forming a violent crescendo that ends in a deafening climax, with a marvelous rogue, an immortal rascal, one Trimalchio, imposing even in his name, a Parthenopean (or something of the sort) landowner, billionaire, connoisseur of Corinthian bronzes and other rare *objets d'art*, a good fellow, generous toward his servants, whom he seats at table with himself when he is not having

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them crucified, a commercial go-between, general all-around meddler, right-thinker, great talker, a great patron of the fine arts, or more precisely, of acrobats and hornplayers ("other diversions impressed him as being foolish")—with a fellow of this sort presiding at a sesquipedalian feast, an orgy that defies description. All this is a bit of truly balanced counterpoint, the casual after-thought of genius, with the picture of a sated paganism at the mystic Christian board; for the lean profile of Christianity is already beginning to take on a faint degree of visibility in certain other classes of society.

There where Hellenic emaciation and Roman tumidity meet in a highly individual curve of decadence, amid the philosophic and besotted magnificence of southern Italy,—it is there that those scenes which we have before us took place; others, lost to us now, occurred against the more human-seeming background of Marseilles. But Petronius, whether he is depicting Trimalchio's Puteoli or that Crotona where our *scholastici vagantes* finally end up, has his eye always on Rome. Coldly terrible above all, and worthy in every respect of the stiletto style of a Swift, is Crotona, the city of the inheritance-hunters.

"In this country, letters are held in no esteem, the art of eloquence finds no employment, and temperate living and good manners come in for no praise; but the entire population of the city is divided into two classes: the swindlers and the swindled... This city, in short, is like an open field in time of pestilence, where only rent corpses are to be seen, and the buzzards that rend them."

Here it is that Eumolpus, the neo-classic poet and *compagnon de geste* of these roysterers of ours, displays his superiority in the art of sponging meals, by boasting of the fabulous riches which he proposes to leave to the citizens of Crotona; it is here that he

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struts his little day and plays the big man, thanks to this testamentary inspiration of his.

"None of those who share in my will shall be able to collect their legacies, unless they tear my body to pieces and devour the whole of it, in the presence of the assembled populace."

What, your stomach goes back on you?

"All you have to do is shut your eyes and make believe that it is not human innards you are gobbling down, but a million sesterces. And so far as that goes, you ought to be able to find some sort of seasoning to kill the taste."

This cannibalistic jest brings the fragments to a close, the high point being reached in those towering mountains of hogflesh served up by Daedalus, the cook, at the table of Ciaccus of Puteoli, and which constitute practically the entire bill-of-fare. In keeping with the Petronian spirit, it may be stated that the last supper above described differs from the other repasts only in the quality of the sow.

* * * * *

"I blush to relate what follows... My memories, if I am to rely upon them, bring me only disgust."

It is the author speaking.

But it is not to be inferred that any ideal of sainthood, so to speak, is to be found in the book. The point from which the world is viewed,—if we may be permitted to recall Nero's emerald,—is the eyepiece, the monocle of a dandy. Existence has no other justification than aesthetics; and Petronius cares to make the acquaintance of no other muse than Elegance. See what he has to say concerning the advantages of restraint in the practice of the fine arts, the excellence of a style that is chaste and bare of adornment

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("great and, so to put it, austere prose is neither padded nor embellished, but moves with a natural grace of its own"); see, too, what he has to say on the freedom and arrogance of the imagination in true poetry, as opposed to pretentious historical poems in the manner of Lucan.

And so, virtue itself comes to be a question of style, of good taste, of an easy gait and self-control, the super-sporting model of which is to be found in that death, delicately sipped off, which Tacitus has related for us, an end even more brilliant than that of Seneca's Julius Canus, who played a game of checkers while waiting for Caligula's henchmen. Surely, of all the modes of being virtuous, this is the most irreligious, socially the least productive, the imitation of which is the least to be recommended; but it is, at the same time, exceedingly exquisite, giving free play to an arrogance that has no excuses to offer and no account of itself to render.

From the vantage-ground of his culture, Petronius with nervous precision contemplates the débâcle of good manners, localizing his theme by placing the action in an eloquent, guzzling, gorging South; he describes the luxury that leads to a ridiculous exhaustion, the gluttony that turns to vomiting. His manner is that of one holding his nose and tiptoeing through filth; but all the while, he is laughing to himself. He is something quite other than a philosopher, a moralizing Seneca, wrinkling his brows in consternation and refusing to find amusement in the scene.

And yet, what a kinship there is between Petronius and Seneca, colleagues at court and colleagues in death, between the tell-all novelist and the grave wise man who was like an emperor! The whole of Seneca, I venture to state, might well be read as an enlightening commentary on the *Satyricon*. I advise, seeing

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that the occasion offers*, the two little books *On the Tranquillity of the Soul* and *On the Shortness of Life*.

Even here, virtue is based upon the philosopher's individual worth; it is, therefore, something in the nature of an exception, almost a case of running-it-out. The discomfited politician sublimates his discomfiture in renunciation, and looks down upon all the things that he does not possess. The Stoic, like a huge hermit snake, sticks his head out of his hole and licks his own despire. Over against the coy elegance of the recluse is to be set the gross and impinging reality of the times, the day of Colosseums. Accordingly, in these pages of Seneca, the picturesque pallidities, the busybodiness of Rome, the prevailing perfidiousness, the wan revelries—all these things which the philosopher reprehends, but which he, nevertheless, creates before our eyes—are possessed, assuredly, of a greater vividness than are the accompanying aphorisms; just as in the case of the novelist, the descriptive realism is far more vivid and vital than is the stylist whose ideal is reaction. And in such a passage as this, we come upon, if not a smile, at least the hint of a smile: "It is more human to mock at life than to deplore it."

A smile with no merriment behind it, even as the novelist's pruriency is a joyless thing; and in the midst of all this moral perfectedness, there is to be discerned a certain lack of enthusiasm. It is plain that the Christian moles have already begun to undermine the subsoil.

* * * * *

Bulwer-Lytton, Sienkiewicz, Boito and many others

* Alluding to Luigi Castiglioni's Italian rendering of the works in question.

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who might be named have not succeeded in giving us the full feeling of that darkly resplendent era, Rome in the first century. There is still an abundance of fresh material for a genius; a genius of the right sort well might be tempted to let himself go amid the great open spaces of that crumbling masterpiece, the *Satyricon*.

In the meanwhile, we have none too many reasons for being grateful to Alexandrian good taste, to a Hellenizing elegance which so often acted as a repressive influence on the comic spirit, the spirit of relentless portraiture, the innate realistic arrogance of the Roman temperament. "Satire is a thing that is wholly our own," it has been said; but we must have precious little of it, seeing that we permitted the *Satyricon* to vanish in obscurity. For two centuries, no one spoke of it, although, certainly, many must have read it; then, it sank from sight completely, leaving behind only a few fossil fragments from which it is possible to compute the magnitude of the whole. It is not unlikely, above all, that the literate looked upon it as rubbish, as something not to be mentioned in polite society.

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

THE CARAVANS

by

Aldo Palazzeschi.

Today

I see before me

*a very long, interminable street,
crowded with caravans.*

*A very long and dusty street
stretching away into the infinite
directly in front of my house.*

At my bedroom window

I stand to gaze

*on all that coming, going, panting, pausing.
Motionless, wandering, winged caravans
are lost to view in the street in front of me.*

*Caravans tall and green
of cypresses and pines,
of olive-trees and chestnut-trees,
of fir-trees, plane-trees, alder-trees,
distant and near,
near and distant,*

*Caravans of houses, huts and castles,
of oxen, horses and of camels,
caravans of birds;
caravans of insects*

*over caravans of roofs;
caravans of boats and barks
on caravans of billows;
caravans of rose-wreaths and wreaths of violets,
caravans of flowers, caravans of fruits,
Caravans of wings*

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*skim breezes or brush leaves,
caravans of eyes
soft chicken eagle eyes,
live glances of the thinking ones,
impoverished looks of fools.
Caravans of spiders,
caravans of dogs,
caravans of feet,
caravans of hands,
shoes, carpet-slippers, gloves,
caravans of wooden-legs,
caravans of breeches,
caravans of petticoats.
Men giant-statured, clad in steel,
men semi-nude, hide-covered,
go on and on and on,
now quickly and now slowly,
commingled with the herds in caravans.
Stiffest of ladies
composedly seated in carriages,
utterly graceless prostitutes in swarms.
And under the clear waters
caravans of fishes are to be seen
joyous, gliding, gleaming
and under the stiller eddies
swollen with rage they gaspingly
devour the sand.
So many stupid thoughts
buzz in my ears,
fly through the air, so light of wing, so light,
some one there is strides deeper yet,
down-pressing with a crutch's weight,
assured of beating down the world.
Above are subtly to be spied
caravans of gleaming stars.
But what is all this passing show,
this coming, going, reprisal and reprieve?*

ALDO PALAZZESCHI

They are all caravans, caravans, caravans,
vans vans vans vans vans vans
ans ans ans ans ans ans
s s s s s s s s s s s s s s s
s s s s s s s s s s s s s s s
s s s s s s s s s s s s s s s
s... s... s... s... s... s...
s... s... s... s... s... s...

*In short, here I stand
 quietly at the window
 from the window of my bedroom
 watch and wait
 But tell me, where are you bound for?
 Where are you bound for, if one may ask?
 What is at the end of that street?
 You are bound for my City of the Sun?
 Fools! Dunces! Stop where you are!
 Do you not know
 that to that city
 none but me may go?
 So help me God!*

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

REFLECTIONS UPON THE TRAGIC GRANDEUR OF ITALY

by

Leo Ferrero.

When I think of Italy, nothing amazes me so much as the smoothly-flowing current of her life. Everything there visible is magnificent and charming. The fields are fertile, north and south, and the land between is lovely. Her cities appear to be all of marble; all are sumptuous. Red columbine-clad walls enclose them upon the hillsides. When her towns are not surrounded by a white foam of olive-orchards, their magnificence finds a liquid reflection, and the light dyes them with a myriad tints.

The climate is healthful, and there are many happy children, and women, beautiful, smiling or grave. The environing waters appear to frame these lands in what is not so much a coast as a dream of distance. But fate, for countless centuries, has decreed that men should pay with an invisible sorrow for the joy of living in the midst of such seeming marvels as these. In all this charm, I see only misery. That is what travellers, unwitting disciples of Taine, fail to realize: that this useless *décor* is a purely esoteric delight; while the benevolence of Nature causes one to dream of a joy in living that is not to be encountered there. They do not realize that paintings and poetic pleasures, like the grape ripened during long days of sunshine, are bright with sorrow, and that all these monuments were erected by the builders of ruin.

The splendor, even the strength of Italy, is founded upon a contradiction: her life is born of the will to

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die. This desire for death is not evident to eyes looking upon dismantled heaps, broken columns, treasures of the centuries, which sun and rain are turning into dust; but that desire is, none the less, a part of all that is yet standing there; it is to be found in the *Divine Comedy*, in the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore, works miraculously rescued from the mortal embrace of the very land they embellish. The secret of Italy, the great secret which lies concealed under so much beauty, and which foreigners are unable to read in the laughing eyes of beggars leaning over the parapets of bridges, is the deadly strife between the people and the aristocracy; the civilization of Italy springs from this conflict, as sparks fly from the scraping of two stones.

* * * * *

Wrapt, as it were, in an eternal twilight, Italy shines only in the gleam of parting day; between the people and the upper classes, between the city and the heights, there is war in the prosperous periods, divorce in hard times. It is not by chance that I have referred to the *Divine Comedy*. It is one of the most beautiful of the splendid monuments of the most productive and the most venomous of Italian cities. Dante was exiled from Florence as a forger, while fulfilling diplomatic duties at the Papal Court. But the very power of wrath, his sense of unjust treatment, the instinct of self-defense, roused him to find expression in sublime invective: "*Indignatio facit versus*"; the *Divine Comedy* is the product of that Italy which had succeeded in stirring up an anger so marvellously creative. When Dante had finished with the *Purgatorio*, he sent it to Giovanni del Virgilio. The old professor wrote him in reply that, if he wanted to leave work that would endure, he ought to devote his attention to the composition of Latin eclogues.

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And the dejected Dante went back to his task. Italy had exiled the poet and rejected the poem.

Our civilization is so hard-hearted that it tolerates only the grand dimension. It sometimes happens that men rich in genius die in the silence of the multitude: not even a memory of them remains. More often, great men stoop to little things to please the public. In the history of a people like ours, there are numberless assassinations, massacres, mutilations, stiflings that are never heard of, and countless efforts die away like songs across the snow.

Nevertheless, among Italians, as among all the peoples bent upon destroying life,—as among the Greeks, for example,—heroes are frequently born, great men and saints, men endowed with a supernatural power of resistance and of domination. It may be said that Italy has seen budding in her breast the greatest heroes of the world, heroes destined to fight upon her side or against her: heroes without hope.

What is the use, I ask myself, of adoring today the shades of such as these in our cathedral tombs?

From time to time, it might be said that the country loses consciousness. Just as, when the sun is veiled in mist over the snow and objects lose their shadows, we are no longer able to distinguish the slopes of the hills, so does all Italy seem to disappear at once. This is the instant of divorce between the upper classes and the crowd. In such periods, the public revolts no more; being no longer inspired, no longer moved to destruction in a diabolic fury against its aristocracies, it turns away from them. There is then neither understanding nor communication, only ignorance. These are the periods when books have no readers, plays no audiences, merchandise no buyers, leaders no followers, and when everyone looks on whatever happens with the utmost indifference. These are the

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most trying and the most tragic times in Italy, when death reigns everywhere.

* * * * *

But what explains this fatal attitude of Italians toward their own national life? Are they lacking in vital passion, resources, wealth, desires, hopes? No. It is the tragedy of Italy that so much of what there goes to waste is extremely precious. Italians have all the qualities necessary for happiness, for the enjoyment of life, for the creation of life: above all, imagination, that element of the human mind which enables man to outdo himself. Possessing imagination is equivalent to possessing practically everything. First of all, it saves one from boredom.

In Italy, the passion for beauty is born of the imagination. That passion is expressed not alone in material creations—palaces, basilicas, fountains, pictures, statues, gardens; but in certain regions like Tuscany, the people take pains to speak with a certain elegance, precision and wealth of words; the same impulse causes the peasant so to plough his field that it shall be good to look upon; it leads him to pick his cattle in accordance with a certain color-principle. The passion for the beautiful is a vital one with the Italian people; it is one of their veritable joys, and may become one of the sources of happiness, like every passion that Nature permits us to gratify. This, moreover, explains why it is that Italy is so amazing in the matter of useless *décor*.

But imagination brings the Italian other satisfactions, of a social order, enabling him to experience and enjoy other passions calculated to mold society, to give life and not to annihilate: the passions of labor and of love. The love of work is more deep-rooted than among the northern peoples,—the

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English, by way of instance. The spirit of the English is like that of a beehive: a myriad cells with each passion and each faculty isolated from the others; for it is, precisely, this beehive system that the Englishman carries over into his serious pursuits. Work is work for him and nothing more, a glum means of paying for week-end pleasures. He endures it for the reason that it is, according to the Scriptures, one of the penalties of original sin. Work, nevertheless, bores him and does not constitute an essentially real part of his existence. He does not talk about his work. The idea would never occur to him of hiring human beings for the purpose of giving them a sense of oneness with their job. An Englishman is not a post-office employe or a government official; he is a man. As soon as he leaves office or workshop, he throws off his profession with his alpaca coat or his overalls. He would not think of working on Sunday, any more than he would of playing on weekdays. He would not dream of doing either more or less than he has to do; nor does he trespass on the rights of others. Even his honesty is partly the result of indifference. The proof that in England work is not enjoyed is that it is held in much greater respect there than elsewhere; the admiration felt for, the honor paid to the worker, if not exactly in proportion to the prevailing dislike of work, has at least some relation to that antipathy.

With the Italian, on the other hand, work is a passion. Imagination with him tolerates no division of life into compartments. For the imagination, as for the Greeks, all is one; an overflowing into every conceivable sphere is the rule in the world of the imagination. The Italian mind is an alembic where the most extraordinary compounds are made; everything is to be found there at one and the same time; from beginning to end, all is a mixture. Hence it

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is, work is not, for the Italian, merely a means of earning his living; it is life itself.

When there is sufficient originality in labor, imagination tends to beautify and enliven it. The Italian is often unbearable, simply because he talks shop all the time. He keeps on thinking shop in his off-hours, while on vacation, when he is drunk. He grumbles over it all with satisfaction. From time to time (which is characteristic of all passion), he detests it. Often, he is not satisfied with it, but envies the work of others. If he cheats, if he is dishonest, it is less to make money than to win a victory, to assert his superiority, his skill. And so, it is hard for him, sometimes impossible, to make any distinction between a man and his work; in his eyes, a bank-employé, a cabinet-maker, a tramp are not men; they are bank-employés, cabinet-makers, tramps, always and everywhere, on Sunday as on weekday.

* * * * *

The Italian loves beauty; he has eyes to see and hands to create. He works, and he loves his task. His day is filled. His night, also. He loves love.

In Paris, love takes the center of the stage; the proof lies, not in the fact that people there make love, but that they talk about it; indeed, they talk of nothing else. But love has become with them merely one of the means of action and creation. In Paris, Love is not simply love; women make use of this power to inspire men to create, to inspire them to work and accomplish results. It becomes an excuse, a means to an end. Underneath all the poems in French literature, as behind every deed in history, there is an implication of love. The *Navire d'Argent* is headed straight for one destination, its lateen sails filled with that mighty gust as by an ocean breeze.

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In Italy, love is love, a hope, an intense longing, which difficulties themselves, however great they may be, serve only to beautify and to lift into the sky of dreams. Of an evening, its boundless power is to be glimpsed in eyes gazing out beyond the narrow, lighted streets of the town, eyes filled with longing, with languor and with hope. Thwarted desires, feverish impulses, that die away far from the crowd, in the deserted coolness of the quays, and on the river-banks. Love does not transform the Italian as it does the Frenchman; it overwhelms him. That is because, with the former, imagination runs through it all. The power, the delight and the terror of love are in proportion to the faculty of reflection and the passion for dreaming. The man who meditates, imagines, anticipates, is led to becloud the facts of life with thought, to deepen and exalt feeling by an excess of consciousness. The very world in which he lives appears, to the eyes of the man in love, to fly off its axis, as he gropes his way among phenomena the vastness of which he is unable to compute, the reality of which he dare not seek to verify. His fancies are like an exposition-palace; showy and fragile, they fade away in the course of a night. Love is the duel not of man with woman, but of every lover fighting himself and crossing swords with that imaginary being which each fashions of the other. It is, therefore, a deep and violent thing only in the case of those gifted with imagination. It is able, indeed, to lead these latter on to lofty discoveries and sublime meditation, as to a place of refuge. If the Italian is a likeable fellow at times, it is for the reason that he is endowed with the faculty of love.

* * * * *

The Italian possesses, as we have said, imagination, the passion for beauty, the passion for work, and

the passion for love. How, then, can he be so unhappy and so inexorable? Why does he so torment himself? What is it that stirs him so? A diabolic passion that nothing can satisfy, the exasperated exaltation of his own consciousness, the feeling that he alone is deserving of life.

What is this thing called love, for the Italian, if not the means of becoming God, the Supreme Being, at least in the eyes of the woman who loves him? Women have come to understand this, and to devote themselves to the male with a tenderness, a strength, a gentleness, a joy which men are deceived into believing natural; the gifts they come bringing are: admiration; that absolute faith which is asked of them in anguish; and the opportunity of putting to the test a dreamed-of greatness. And if stupid, wayward men bend over to gaze, the image these mirrors, marvellously altered by love, give back is a flawless reflection of the gazers' selves. Thanks to the good will of women and their blind intelligence, love is for every man a means of beholding himself as he gazes into his dream. Every Italian, the truth is, as in Berkeley's philosophy, fancies that he really lives in the world which he has conceived for himself; and the existence of others, in varying degree, disturbs or annoys him.

If all notable Italians detest each other, even to the point of denying another's most striking qualities, if every public man despises and envies all those who rise to higher place, it is because the superiority of another is a very real irritation to an Italian; I would go so far as to say that, for him, it is the negation of his own *raison d'être*; his myth is brutally given the lie by the existence, by the achievement, by the activity of another. Accordingly, in self-defense, in order to save his life, he is led to deny the truth of what he sees. For the Italian, envy is

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a mode of affirming his own existence, by obliterating that of others.

For the same reasons, it has always been impossible to form groups in Italy; but if circumstances or an evident advantage, force the Italian to become part of a group, if for a little while he allows himself to admit the existence of associates, in the hope of acquiring more power to assert his own individuality, he at once proceeds to extend to his group his personal conception of life; his will imposes his ego upon them, and instead of denying the world in his own name, he denies it in the name of his group. When an organization is formed in any field, it begins by surrounding itself with an atmosphere of isolation. It thereupon settles down into the desert like those towers which are to be discovered standing in the wilder regions of the Roman *campagna*.

It has often been said that Italy is a land of factions. That is a great historical and sociological error: Italy is a land of monopolies. The very weakness of a society in which all the members hate each other is an assurance of power to the first group that is formed there. Italy has always had a single political party, one organized government, one bank, one official newspaper, one magazine, one publisher, one national poet, one orchestral conductor. Every Italian who does not force himself to become a part of the group which constitutes this monopoly in each domain,—a monopoly of intelligence, of merit, of courage, of achievement, of beauty,—is condemned to annihilation; if he has political aspirations, he will not be elected deputy; if he follows a literary career, the papers will not mention his name; if he composes operas, he will find no orchestra at his disposal.

How, then, does it come that Italy, through so many centuries and in spite of this damning pride,

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has had the most peaceful, the most brilliant civilization in Europe? The reason is, essentially, that there have been, always, many points of focus for every group. In every city, there has always existed a monopoly, that is to say, a welter of wealth; but the cities and the hoards of wealth were numberless; and offsetting the monopoly of Florence, there were to be seen in Tuscany alone the monopolies of Siena, of Lucca, of Pisa, of Arezzo, and of Pistoia. Rivalries were balanced; as they increased, they increased the number of the privileged. The problem is one marked by a complexity hitherto unknown for the last fifty years; it is the first time in her history that Italy, having blossomed out into municipalities, has found herself unable to set over against the universal will to die the jealous traditions and the ancient and distinctive life of the provinces.

* * * * *

But what, then, is the deep-seated reason for this instinct itself? How is the mystery of a country where life is born of death to be explained? How is this civilization to be defined?

I believe that in Europe there are two types of civilization: one is *social*, and the other *intellectual*. It is almost impossible for any man, or any nation, to possess at one and the same time the qualities called for by these two civilizations; there is a contradiction between the two.

The social civilizations teach men to act, to conduct themselves with some consideration for one another. The intellectual civilizations teach men to think. In social civilizations, order reigns at the expense of grace; in the intellectual civilizations, grace, art and

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philosophy reign at the expense of order. In the social civilizations, a manufacturer is pardoned for being ignorant; in the intellectual civilizations an artist is pardoned for being immoral. In social civilizations, men have principles; in intellectual civilizations, they have tastes. Social civilizations are so well organized that men need no longer worry about how the wheels go round; each one, nevertheless, finds his place in the scheme of things; but amid the chaos of an intellectual civilization, those individuals who fail to realize the weaknesses, the advantages, the mechanical phases of their world are lost. In social civilizations, simple keeping of the peace draws one away from meditation, and ease of life assures tranquillity; in the intellectual civilizations, the lack of order stirs up intelligence, and intelligence results in disorder. England is a model of a social civilization, Italy the model of an intellectual civilization.

In Italy, life is destroyed by the very forces that feed it, and it is fed by the very forces that destroy it: imagination, which creates beauty and disorder; reflection, which finds outlet in affirmation and negation; the exaltation of the ego, which is corrupted into envy. Between her creative and her destructive energies, between her greatness and her corruption, there takes place a constant interchange of vital force, one being born of the other: evil of good, good of evil. The very intelligence of the Italian is shaped, sharpened and polished by the difficulties of his existence; but these evil geniuses of the race are all-powerful, and no wisdom is potent enough to hold them in check.

Italy must have possessed secret and inconceivable resources; otherwise, a civilization so drained for ten centuries would have worn itself out in clearing away the successive heaps of devastation. Like every intellectual civilization, like Greece, she has gone

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farther than other peoples, but at the price of enormous sufferings, and because of those sufferings: Dante called her an *inn of sorrow*. I cannot think of Rome on fire without seeing in that conflagration a picture of Italy. An intellectual civilization can shine only by burning, and the light which Italy has shed upon the world is that of a city wrapt in flames.

(Translated by Robert J. Cole.)

CUTTLE BONES

(Poem for a Friend)

by

Eugenio Montale

*Thought gives your smile again, a limpid stream,
glimpsed there by chance within its pebbled bed,
a tiny mirror for the ivy's clustered dream,
a calm, white, clasping heaven overhead.*

*Such my remembrance; for I cannot scan
your distant face: Is your soul frank and free;
or are you, world-flayed, one of those who flee,
and wear their suffering as a talisman?*

*So much I'll tell: your thought-given countenance
drowns fickle torments in a wave of calm,
and glides into my memory's graying glance
pure as the summit of a fair young palm.*

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

THE ASSASSIN OF THE TREES

by

Grazia Deledda.

There lived one time in Orune, an untamed Sardinian village, situated on a high mountain and famed for its feuds, two friends, the one a poor man, the other well-to-do.

The poor one bore the name of Martinu Selix. He was nicknamed "Musket-shot," perhaps because he employed that word more often than any other as an expletive. Otherwise, he did not appear to be ferociously inclined, and, as a matter of fact, he was not able to make use of a gun, since he was too poor to buy one, along with the necessary permit to bear arms. He led the life of a farmer, sowed much grain, was young, strong, of a ruddy complexion, with very black, sullen and suspicious eyes.

Sarvatore Jacobbe, the well-to-do one, on the other hand, was a sort of small landholder. His native costume was set off with a velvet jacket. He owned lordly acres, and whenever he went abroad, he carried a powder-horn, attached to a great black-silk cord. He possessed cattle, horses, dogs, two servants, and a large tract of land, planted in old-olive and wild-olive trees. He had a beautiful sister and much conceit.

Everybody said: "Martinu thinks he is somebody, because he goes around with Sarvatore Jacobbe. He thinks Sarvatore is going to give him his sister for a wife."

But Musket-shot did not think of such a thing, even. He rendered numerous delicate services to his

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friend; sometimes, when the latter was at Nuoro on business, or when he was busy with elections, Martinu would stroll over to the sheep-fold to see that the shepherd was doing his duty and that everything was all right. In short, he performed a hundred small services of one sort or another; nor did he find any humiliation in this, except when the beautiful Paska would look at him as if he were a servant, or when she sometimes would make fun of him.

The women of Orune are beautiful, proud, rough-mannered, shrewd, endowed with a savage intelligence. They speak a marvelous language of their own, warm, witty, full of fantastic imagery; they feign enthusiasm, wrath, wonderment over many things; they wear embroidered smocks with bright yellow corsets, and their eyes are deep and dark as night. They are fond of dancing, they sit on the ground in oriental fashion, and they call down terrible curses from heaven for the least earthly offense.

The father of Paska and Sarvatore had died in prison, serving a sentence, God save us, for homicide. His children, naturally, said that he was innocent; and each year, on the anniversary of his death, Paska would renew her mourning, weeping and tearing her hair and singing extemporaneous funeral verses. Then, she would send a crown to Our Lady of Valverde, with the prayer that the saint would inflict an awful punishment on those who, by their false testimony, had brought about the conviction of the dead man.

Paska was as ambitious and conceited as her brother. From infancy, in accordance with the custom of the land, she had been betrothed to a man as rich as he was old. Her fiancé, having lost his fortune, the headstrong child would hear no more talk of marriage. It would have been hard to say what dreams were hers, as she sat on her heels on the shining church pave-

ment, her pomegranate eyelids fluttering slightly, as her gaze lifted to lose itself in the rude frescoes of the ceiling.

She was tall and willowy, with a rigid bronze profile. She seemed, indeed, a madonna in bronze. The richest men were afraid to pay attention to her; and so, as readily may be imagined, Martinu Selix did not dare even to look her in the face. He would not have admitted it, but she was something of an aversion to him.

Like all the more well-to-do women of Orune, a land given to sheep-grazing, Paska knew how to make butter and cheese to perfection, Sardinian cheeses, such as *tabeddas* and *treccie*, and all those other kinds which are made out of curdled milk with the aid of a fire. One day, Martinu found her seated on the ground in front of the fireplace, making cheese. For a moment, he stood aside and regarded her coldly, coughing and clearing his throat familiarly. Then, not knowing what else to say, he took it upon himself to criticize the way in which she shaped the cheeses, hesitating as to whether she should make a chicken or a hare out of the lower portion.

"Come on," he said, "give it a slap, like this, and this, and don't waste time trying to make those silly things, since it's all going to be eaten, anyway!"

She flushed and replied haughtily: "What business is it of yours? Oh, no doubt, you know all about it. You've had so much experience of your own!"

It was Martinu's turn to flush now. With these words, Paska had thrown his poverty in his face.

"Musket-shot!" he exclaimed, beside himself, "if you speak to me like that again, I'll box your ears, so help me Christ!"

And he went away, offended and mortified.

Then, Sarvatore decided to graft all the wild-olive

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and old-olive trees on his uncultivated land. He wished to make a fine plantation out of it. It was in the valley of the Isalle, adjoining the river of that name, and it was, without doubt, a very fertile plot, and as fair a one as ever was.

Sarvatore proceeded to set about the thing in the elaborate manner in which the rich landowners of the country about Nuoro did their grafting. He invited all his farmer friends and those men who were the most efficient at the task. All gave their services free, but in return, they enjoyed a very fine day, one filled with song and with an abundance of good things to eat. It was, in a double sense of the word, more a bucolic festival than a day of toil; for even the shepherds took part in the ceremony; and a Latin poet—if there were one left—would have found material for a most delightful eclogue in the scene.

On the day appointed, the friends of Sarvatore Jacobbe came to the orchard-close. They came on horseback, with their women mounted on pillions behind them. The padrone's shepherds came also, with live sheep, stupid looking creatures, bound to their saddles, and with fresh cheese in their pouches. In a short time, the fires were kindled under the gray old-olive trees, and the smoke leaped up in glorious columns through the deep-blue. May smiled in the valley; the horses, cantering about, broke down the tall grasses; waves of silver grain rose and fell in the distance; the oleanders bent their tufted dark-coral buds over the green waters of the river; and warm scents passed on the breeze.

The shepherds busied themselves doing a little bit of everything. They opened the beehives, drawing forth the honey, warm and yellow as molten gold; they cut the throats of the sheep and skinned the beasts, lifting the bluish pelts from the bared red flesh; they cooked meat-puddings in the glowing

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cinders and roasted the meat on long spits of wood, jesting and laughing with the women folk who helped them.

Paska was, of natural right, the queen of the occasion. The other women, hovering about her like serving-maids, would not allow her to do any work, herself; but she presided, with her tall Byzantine figure, which, every now and then, would quiver like the slender river-rushes.

At a little distance apart, the farmers were sawing away, attentively, almost religiously, at the twisted trunks of the wild-olive and old-olive trees. Pietro Maria Pinnedda, famed for his skill at grafting, would go from one group to another, looking on with his big malignant gray eyes. His face was full-blooded, and a young yellow beard adorned his cheeks. Having placed the sprout on the cloven trunk, bright yellow in appearance, he would bind it straight with a willow-withe; then, he would cover it with loam, made into a paste, upon which after Pietro Maria's fiery finger had been pressed around the sprout, he would make the sign of the cross, as an augury of and a prayer for good luck. Finally, he would fashion about the graft a small triangle of India-fig-leaf, as a protecting cap against the increasing and fructifying warmth of the sun.

And so, from tree to tree, the wild, hair-like foliage of the olives rolled on the tall flowering grasses, while the planters spoke of bandits, of business matters, of trees and tree-planting, and of women, and told old tales of times past. Their deep voices rose like a weird song. It seemed the wild cry of a soul, which wept as it sang, dying away in the distance, among the trees, beneath which the grass preserved a large ring of more intense freshness, amid the silences of the valley and the river, and beyond the river. And then, the arabesque gourds, filled with red wine, began

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to circulate, warming still more the blood of these fierce men with the gleaming teeth and the coarse dark clothes.

Martinu lent a hand to all. Showing all his straight teeth in a smile, he appeared to be quite happy. He was, obviously, Sarvatore's superintendent, and did nothing but stand smilingly, with his hands crossed behind his back. Some of the guests were irritated by Selix' lordly manner, especially Pretu-Maria Pinnedda, who would toss him an occasional piercing glance, metallic in its wrath.

For the red-faced youth with the big malignant gray eyes was in love with Paska, and was jealous of the friendship which Sarvatore accorded to Selix. The patronizing airs assumed by Martinu today annoyed him more than ever, and it took only a breath of air to annoy Pretu-Maria. Already, on two occasions, harsh words had been exchanged over the proper method of binding the withes. Martinu had said, "It is not necessary to bind them so straight", and the other had contradicted him.

Speaking of Paska, at a moment when Sarvatore was some distance away, one of the men had remarked, jestingly and somewhat ironically, "We'll marry her to Martinu Selix."

"Musket-shot!" replied the latter, "and does that seem such an impossible thing to you?"

"Musket-shot!" said the other, "everything is possible in this world."

Martinu shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, Have it your way.

Pretu-Maria flushed angrily, but did not say anything, for it was too sore a subject with him, and he understood that they spoke this way in his hearing merely to goad him on.

If you're as cunning as the eagle, I'll be as cunning as the fox, he thought.

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A moment before the meal began, not knowing how better to renew his advances to Paska, he said to her, with feigned tenderness, "I know now why it is you won't have anything to do with me."

"Why is it, beardless vulture?" she asked, flinging him a condescending look.

"Because you've got the idea you're going to get Martinu Selix."

She let out a shrill cry, one of those characteristic screams, such as only the women of Orune can give.

"Who told you that?"

"He himself."

"Liar!"

"Strike me dead, if it isn't so."

And then, he repeated the dialogue, adding a little of his own. Paska grew black in the face, and began to tear her hair as a sign of spite and humiliation. Partly satisfied, Pretu-Maria begged her to be still and not make a scene; but she, deeply angered, persisted in deriding Martinu openly during the remainder of the meal.

Seated in a circle on the ground, the guests ate from wooden dishes and pieces of cork; the sharpened knives they carried served as their only eating-utensils. The honey, still warm, seasoned their meal, even more than the wine; in it they dipped their slices of fresh cheese, the roasted cheese, lettuce leaves, bread, and finally their meat. Many ate the honey without anything else, sucking the sweet part and spitting out far from them the masticated wax.

Witty speeches darted from one to another; their musical laughter rang out in the shade of the old-olives. To the North and East, the blue mountains blurred in the flood of noonday light. Suddenly, the merriment stopped, and an ominous cloud passed over the gay assemblage. Paska, turning toward Martinu, spoke:

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"Look at the Count of Artois, will you? He's hunting for a wife. What a pity there's none for him at Orune!"

Martinu, who, up to this time, had replied calmly to Paska's pointed jests, began to lose his temper; the wine had made him more fiery and suspicious than usual.

"Leave me in peace, Paska, won't you, since it's not you I'm after, anyway. You know well enough that I'm a beggar, but I'm likely to find a better woman than you for my wife."

"Oh, is that so! Our Lady of Valverde help us! You don't want a woman like me. You want one—like yourself!"

"And who are you? Just because you have a penny or two to spend on yourself. Musket-shot! But listen to what I say: the world is a stair. Who knows but my children will be giving charity to yours!"

"But for the present," she said, "I can do that for you."

Martinu slammed a small tincup full of wine, which he held in his hand, violently to the ground, and cried out an insult to the girl.

"Martinu!" shouted Sarvatore.

"You don't mean anything to me! Nobody means anything to me!" bellowed Martinu, his eyes green with anger. "You're mangy curs all of you. I'm not dependent on you, Sarvatore, and it may be that you need me worse than I need you. I don't ask bread or grain or money of you, and yet, your sister throws my poverty in my face. Poverty is not vile, Sarvatore Jacobbe, poverty is not vile. But if you think my friendship is going to bring disgrace upon you, I can well—"

"You're drunk!"

"You're drunk, yourself!"

"You're a mangy cur!"

GRAZIA DELEDDA

"You're a mangy cur, yourself!"

It was enough. A fierce dispute arose; and for a while, it seemed that stains of blood might mingle with the wine-stains that spattered the grass. The two friends threw up to each other things of which the rest of those present had known nothing in the past. Their faces burned, whether more in anger or from shame, it would be hard to say.

The women screamed. White with terror, Paska strove with coaxing wiles to smother the flame she had started. The fire spent itself, and the friends appeared to be reconciled once more. Martinu, who had wanted to go off alone, held back by physical force, stayed on. But he did not cast his sullen eyes on Salvatore's face again; while the latter stood in a corner, sincerely mortified by the scandal which had been caused.

The grafting was resumed. Pretu-Maria had the air of a victor, but Martinu also smiled, from time to time, in a forced way, as the sign of the cross was made on the grafted trunks.

* * * * *

Two days later, Martinu Selix set out for the feast of San Francesco di Lula. He left at twilight, on foot, with bare head; for that had been his vow. Night overtook him on the way; then, the pilgrim, instead of going on to the saint's shrine, turned back to the valley of the Isalle and took up a position among the oleanders. In the deep of night, while the sacred dew of heaven rained on sleeping nature, while the trembling waters of the river reflected the great secret peace of the moon at sunset, and the perfume of the rushes came up more pungent from the river banks, Musket-shot carried out his terrible unarmed vengeance. He stripped the trees of the sprouts which had been grafted with such religious care.

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But as he went to climb back over the wall, the figure of a man rose up inexorably in front of him, and the barrel of a gun gleamed in the pale moonlight.

"I knew it, wicked weasel!" cried Sarvatore Jacobbe. "I could kill you now like a dog, but I'm going to do something worse to you."

Three men rose from the hedge.

"You have seen," Sarvatore said to them. "We're not going to kill this 'pilgrim,' are we? We shall not give him up, even, shall we? But, Martinu Selix, you are going to work for me *for nothing*, you are going to be my slave for as many weeks as you have killed trees."

The strange sentence echoed in the great dewy peace of the valley. Martinu Selix completed his pilgrimage; but on his return, he entered the house of the proud Jacobbe as a servant, and for three years, he underwent his moral and physical chastisement.

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

BERTO

by
Umberto Saba.

*Timidly, he drew near to me,
with childish awkwardness, in one
of my most blissful and most tristful hours.
Stockings he wore of heavenly hue;
a seeming mute reproof went wandering
within his eyes. A great and gentle joy
grew in my heart; a little more,
I should have died, or cried my fright. "Give me,"
I said, "your hand." Obediently,
he placed his hand in mine, and long, for long,
we gazed in silence, gazed so very long
that time for us, as in a tale,
no longer was. Then, voicelessly, at last I said:
"Berto, you do not know how very much
I love you, who today love not myself.
Without the thought of you, I cannot live."
Unlike myself, he seemed unmoved, and drew
his hands and eyes from mine. "I have so many
[things,"
I spoke imploringly, "to tell you; there are so many
[things,
my lad, which I should like to ask you."
He fell back as if frightened, and as if
desirous of withdrawing into himself.
"Berto," I said to him, "you need not be afraid.
It is my way of speaking, as you know:
I should not dare, or hardly, to question you.
Are you not my hidden treasure, suddenly
come back to me? The name I bear today,
is it not your own?" A disenchanted smile
now flitted over his face: "You are not wearing
the watch and golden chain that was promised me*

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one day."—"I do not wear it any more, my laddie. The only timepiece that I care for now has alabaster pillars; on the top, belauered and disporting genii; it's stopped at one o'clock forever." At this, he turned his gentle little face and smiled; his hand remained within my own; he gazed into my face. "And I remember," he said, "one older yet."—"And I the love that held you close, guided your steps to the green gardens, the love that wrapped your cradle. And for all I know, I am a poet for that love today, and for that love, I am today a sick man." "And were you in the war?" came his reply. "Did you kill an enemy?"—"And is it, Berto, you who ask me that? Why is it, you do not speak, who should have much to say, of your old nurse, nor prattle to me of your mamma, she, on that atrocious day that we remember, who took you from your love, that she might have you for herself alone, that three-year love by which you'd lived till then?"—"My mamma who took me from my old Peppa, she is dead?" "Yes, died in my own arms, and glad to die. But [first, she saw your face again, a trace of it, in my little daughter's face. But your old nurse lives! And how she longs for you yet! If she sees a child that looks like you a little, she must take it and press it to her bosom, say the words she used to say to you so long ago. She's living yet, I swear, but greatly changed, yes, greatly changed by now. Ah, Berto, why that shadow on your face? Speak, speak to me." "I am," he said, "a dead man. Touch me no more."

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

THE DECAY OF DYING

by

Paola Masino.

So long as the first man remained unaware of death, he was unconscious alike of birth or being; he did not know what manner of thing he was. It may be that he imagined himself a river, or a mountain, or a star, a little bit of each. He could see and feel his own body growing and palpitating, in accordance with inexorable laws. The same laws that caused the smooth-running rivers to flow from their sources to their mouths, the same laws that caused the mountains to rise to their towering peaks, and the stars to change their position, propelling regally onward the stream of life, shot through with fascicles of light. In the attainment of a distant goal, tidal mouth or summit, or as he looked up at the first sky he knew and stood beneath the infinite reaches of space, all this, the unknown, was to him a changeless, joyous and unconscious entity. It was nature itself. As such, it remained an ecstatic thing, and one in which was to be found no cause for wonderment.

The first time that a man and a woman begot offspring, they failed to understand or appreciate their own work. Eve sat there with the child in her lap, looked at it, and did not know what to do with it. By Cain, it is true, the order of nature was disturbed: not so much through his assassin's act, as by the fact of immaturity. The act of slaying was as spontaneous with him as that of conceiving had been with Eve. Only, he was more sophisticated than she, and became conscious within himself of the demands of

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life, began to fight and to defend life, to create anew and to destroy it. This last vision was, barely, an embryonic one, and the concrete if premature strata of his mind tended to throw everything into confusion, leading him to believe in the presence of threatening voices all about him. Had Cain not been a weak-minded romantic, he would not have permitted himself to be thus terrified, but would have brought some sort of order into his thinking, and would somehow have got to the bottom of the business. Needless to say, he was more artist than mathematician, and so, was unable to find the formula; as a result, he took to his heels and left the world behind him, leaving at the same time his own investigations unfinished. Adam and Eve might have been able to carry them on, but they were all too healthy, morally and physically, to be concerned with anything other than themselves. And what is more, they were getting along in years. They could not understand Cain, and no more could they understand the fact of death. By a sudden (hysteric) intuition, Eve was led to associate the act of killing with the act of fecundation; and she even insisted that, following the latter act, she, like her son, had heard threatening voices. They thus came to believe that all inexplicable actions derived from something other than their own will, and so, they created God. They made God the author of everything that was otherwise inconceivable, and carefully put him to one side to be made use of as occasion might offer. But in the meanwhile, they were fashioning their own existence into a form of internal motion with which at first they had not been acquainted. Other men were born, and thought and labor came. Their progress was a slow one, for the reason that death was a rare manifestation at that time. Ideas went uselessly to rust in worldly bodies. From generation to generation, life grew ever shorter

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and the intellect taller. They came to understand this one thing: that death is civilization.

This first step having once been taken, man paused.

It is possible that, looking upon death as a development of civilization, each one thought that he was entitled to make such use of it as he saw fit, without regard to others, having come to look upon it as a personal experience. Humanity began to indulge in a series of writhings, resembling those of the female serpent, by way of scrutinizing and unveiling the attendant mystery. It was no longer an intellectual curiosity. They had come to understand, of a sudden, that the thought of death, had it been born within the brain instead of forced upon the intellect from without, would have remained an unknown one. And that was when the decay of dying set in. The human mind grew lazy and content with the conquests it had achieved, and proceeded to bring God back to earth, to reduce him to dust, and then to exalt and trust in him once more. Then began all the babbling about the journeyings of souls, the fate of bodies, the equality of all, and justice from above. As mankind's great symbols died, and the Gods along with them, the superstitious began huddling around the fire and talking about the price of a lot in the cemetery, the best-looking wreaths, and what they would have at the wake.

Now, this age of ours is a little more grown up. We very rarely speak of the subject,—only now and then, over a bottle of Marsala; and then we do no more than express a single pious, highly praiseworthy desire: namely, that we may die in our own beds. The shroud is waiting for us, with our monograms embroidered on the floral pieces and upon the pillow with the stylish lacework.

It becomes a matter of good form, just as it is a

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matter of good form for a young girl on her wedding-day to wear a grey traveling suit. Men have found a human formula for death, by way of rendering it acceptable. It is a thing perfect as it stands. The unforeseen, the frightful, the impossible aspects have been banished. Death having been reduced to the scale of daily living, it is only right and proper to speak of it as one would at a feast for the dead on All Souls' Day. There are even certain fanatics of the new rite who would like to die sitting crowned and upon thrones, or kneeling at altars, or with their heads reclining upon volumes of poetry. This is what is known as defying death, or again, as "a beautiful death."

But those who would appear, above all others, to have accepted death as an expression of life are in reality the ones who have succeeded in completely separating one idea from the other. When they were infants in arms, they were afraid of "dead folks." The "dead folks", to the childish mind, are a monstrous imposition of the supernatural upon real life, and in place of representing that loss and desolation which comes from the absence of a loved being, they stand for a dread and ineluctable fact, an all-enveloping fact, one that wraps us round when we are born, and which, keeping us constant company, absorbs and suffocates us, initiating us step by step into an undreamed of mystery. And so it is, the social being, man, for centuries has renounced all Heroism.

For we only apply the name of Hero to those who have no fear, and who defy death. The heroes of life are those who do not fear death. The Hero, even before he is born, is one who has no fear of eternity. A man like this begets a new need; he makes this old world of ours, from one end to the other, feel the need of sinking through a hole in the universe.

Henceforward, there is no further need of appeasing

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any such curiosity as this. Men have demonstrated the fact that they are well enough able to live without any knowledge of the nature of death. To endow them with such a knowledge at the present time would only give rise to grave confusions.

If life were what it is platitudinously said to be, a romance, and if men had this romance all written out in book form before them, they would, before even so much as glancing at the frontispiece, turn back to see how it was all going to end; and upon this, they would base their judgment, like those young ladies of today who are so passionately fond of a romantic love literature, but who are only interested in the "happy-ever-afterward" ending and the Côte d'Azur honeymoon. Just like these young ladies, men would very soon become familiar with the situations to be expected; they would erect the thing into an irresistible law, and when they did not find the ending they expected they would toss aside the book in disgust. And then, there would be a rebellion against fate.

Such a rebellion would be a grand but futile thing. As futile as was that of our first forebears. The very power that created them stepped in to break them, by way of putting down the conflagration. To be a great rebel one has need of all the gifts of nature: overawing genius; noble pride; high faith; brute strength. He needs to be the masterpiece of a God. Whereas, man is but the penitent afterthought of a frightened Demiurge.

(Translated from the Italian by S. P.)

LANDSCAPE

by

Raffaello Franchi.

The landscape, as though unwilling to terrify us with its splendour, has plundered the rainbow and dimmed its spoils and spread them forth in trembling captivity behind a dewy muslin of mist. So, poured like a balm over the land, above every field and cottage and shelf of rock, the light, restless in the air, tenuous and dim as in a fresco of Fra Angelico, dies, lapping a hidden brink, yielding its bright moisture to the thirst of the earth. Until our desire is a flame—to be sucked down likewise within that well of stillness, and stir with our lips the paler source of the plain's pale colours. These then are the comrade forces that serve the desire of the visible world—the deep earth pressing upward towards the birth of form, and the furthest sky stooping to gather it within its light. And where is the sweetness exceeding the sweetness of vision, its wombfruit of mystery true beyond all reality and beautiful beyond the beauty of this veil of visible colour laid upon the face of the earth by the sun and its heaven, in threatening token of their more than human essence. And who shall rejoice as a grieving tree, alone and rocked by a little wind and then still and bowed again by a spent breath ridden by a fading bell.

Let us stand firm with a quiet heart before the majesty of the earth. To-night, silently, a flower will be born unto her that in the morning, immeasurably old, will yield indifferently to the breeze. And we, purified in contemplation, clothed in the patient tranquillity of the soil, will stoop forward and gather, quietly, a fruit of the earth.

(Translated from the Italian by S. B. Beckett.)



Drawing, by Savinio.

THE HOME-COMING

by

Giovanni Comisso.

I remember, one warm night in the Gorizia zone, during the cholera outbreak, lying in camp and dreaming—or imagining—that I had tramped all the way back to my native town. I was standing at the city gates, tired out with my long hike and impatient to get home; but the gates were closed, and the sentries on guard would not let me pass. I waited there all night, until it was dawn at last and they opened the gates. I needn't have been in a hurry; my family was away, and my friends appeared to be angry with me; not one of them would look at me. I don't know whether it was a dream or a vision, but it came true after Caporetto. A mounted patrol halted me at the San Tommaso gate, and drove me away as soon as they knew I was from the front. It didn't matter. I found an easy place in the wall, climbed over and ran straight home. I rang the bell twice. The whole place was shut up and my family had gone, sent away out of the town like everybody else. Even the half-wits! They had been kept to the last. The shops were closed and the streets empty, except for a stray shopkeeper scurrying nervously along. Crossing the square, I met a friend who had been rejected as unfit. He seemed half-dazed and asleep, walking arm in arm with his girl. I greeted them cordially. They stared at me.

"What are you doing back here? How does it come you are not at the front?"

I thought he was very surly and selfish.

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"Well, you see..."

But he wouldn't listen to me, and turned away in a rage. I felt like a stranger.

I was determined to sleep at home that night. I came in from the fields behind and, leaping the walls, made my way into our garden. Then I wrenched a window off its hinges and got into the house. The air inside was terrible, but otherwise, everything was pretty much in order throughout the deserted rooms. My father and mother must have eaten just before they left, because there was a cloth on the kitchen table, and dirty plates. I fingered a piece of apple-rind; that made me feel nearer to them somehow. The cupboards were stuffed with provisions: big hunks of cheese, macaroni, fruit, sugar, coffee, oil. My mother had seen a shortage coming and had laid in supplies.

I went outside. D. H. Q. was in an hotel a few yards up the street, and I thought I would offer to put up the officers of my own company. The lieutenant from Naples, who was my C. O., said he'd be very glad.

Some people I knew in the hotel told me my family had left for Florence the day before. We had lunch together. Nothing was said until after dessert, when one of them asked me how it was we had been forced to retreat. I knew him—rich, and young and strong too. I had often wondered how he managed to keep out of it. I started to tell him:

"The whole front line was wiped out by poison gas..."

He interrupted me coldly:

"Didn't the French stand up to it?"

I lost my temper:

"To hell with the French. What we need is a few fellows like you to come out and show us how to stand up to it."

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And that was the way they treated us at home, after all we had done and suffered, simply because they were feeling the pinch for the first time and didn't like it. Divisional mess was on that evening; and I dined with the other officers. The general was very sad and nobody spoke. There we were with excellent wine, and not even sure that we would be allowed to stay. Some were saying we would have to withdraw to the other side of the Po. After dinner, I wandered round to the café next door, where everybody used to hang out in the old days. When I went inside, I found that the orderlies and dispatch-bearers had turned it into sleeping quarters. Some were stretched out asleep on the red-velvet sofas. They had found some old liquor in the cellar, and came crowding round me, offering me a drink.

A lieutenant in the Carabinieri attached to our Division asked me to take a turn with him through the town and see that nobody was breaking the curfew that went into effect at sundown. I felt something like rapture, walking along the dark silent streets and wondering how this strange city could be mine. Astonished and rapturous. Down from the Piave came the sound of machine-guns, faint and clear through the silence.

The lieutenant told me about the soldiers who had been shot that morning on the racetrack for having looted a few abandoned houses. A little stream kept us company until we came to the low arches. We passed under them. Suddenly, we heard voices in a house on the corner of a narrow lane, voices and the clinking of tumblers in a toast. Then silence, followed by the soft tinkle of a slow-timed music-box. Light came streaming through the shutters. The voices were merry ones, women's voices. An old woman opened the door and stood back at once from the threshold. Two women and an officer were in the

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little room. The women were from the town; I knew them both, and the officer too. On the table were bottles, and the little music-box. One of the women was called Tea. She had a strong, coarse voice, which yet was childlike in its inflections. As soon as she saw us, she snatched an enormous old-fashioned pistol out from under a cushion and pointed it at us.

"You won't catch me coming quietly," she said in dialect, to the great amusement of all present. I invited them all to supper at my house the following evening, and the old woman promised to come and cook for us.

In the house, besides all the food, I found bottles, many bottles. An uncle of mine had sent a couple of his maids to see what they could save from the wreckage, and I made them stay; so that in the evening, there was a woman to each officer. Each couple had a little private table hidden away behind screens, and soft couches so that they could eat lying down. The kitchen was transformed, bright and cheerful with a fire burning in the range, and the old woman perspiring over her dishes. We had our orderlies waiting on us. I had baskets of bottles brought up from under the stairs. We couldn't be bothered opening them with a corkscrew, so we slashed off their tops with our bayonets. The wine foamed up and splashed against the walls, and we threw the empty bottles out of the window onto the roof of the house next door.

My fellow officers had the absolute freedom of the house, and the whole place was turned into a kind of low-class hotel. I could hear the orderlies eating and drinking and joking with the old woman. I carried Tea into the room where I had slept as a child. She kept her money hidden in her stocking. Nothing would do but she must tell me all about her own childhood, what a thrill riding a bicycle had given her

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in those days. Then, she went to sleep. And so it was nearly every evening at my house.

There were always two lorries waiting in the little square near the hotel, for the order to leave was expected any minute. We had no definite news from the front. One day, some shells fell on the outskirts of the town. My uncle's maids fled. There were some quite valuable things in my house, and I didn't see why they should go to provide loot for the Austrians, if there was any way of hiding them. So I took my C. O.'s orderly and my own, and the three of us got all the pots and pans together, and packed them up in big crates. Then, we went after the linen and copper-ware and stowed everything away in a room in a far corner of the house, and on top of it all, we piled every object of any value I could find—blankets, mattresses, pictures, mirrors—anything and everything I could lay my hands on in the house. After which, I locked the door and pushed a wardrobe up against it. But my C. O.'s orderly, a Neapolitan like his superior, remarked with an air of great cunning that there was no use trying to hide the door behind the wardrobe because the wardrobe was a piece of furniture which, it was plain to be seen, did not belong there. I took his advice, and decided then and there that we should have to wall up the door. The two orderlies worked on it a whole day, and I kept bringing them drinks, I was so anxious for them to make a good job of it.

That night they smeared it with mud, and the next morning, almost before it was dry, they gave it a coat of plaster. You could see the outline of the door, but I thought that the Austrians, if they did come, would be in too great a hurry and too excited to pay much attention to it. It made me happy to feel that I had safe-guarded my humble treasures. Then, it occurred to me that I might never see my town again; so I went out and walked the deserted streets and looked

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at the houses all shuttered up in broad daylight, and suffered the same strange feeling of rapture. More than one whispered summons came floating down to me through the air, and I would catch a glimpse at some high window of a woman's head and beckoning hand. The last leaves on the trees along the river were yellow now, and lustrous in the mist. No town could be so beautiful as this abandoned city of mine, I thought. And when, turning down a street, I found myself headed for the Piave, the steady dry crackle of machine-guns reached my ear. Outside the walls, I came upon a party of Austrian prisoners who had been marched down from the lines under mounted escort. They were halted in front of a public house, and then were brought in and locked up in the very room where we all used to dance and stage a celebration on the last day of school.

That evening, while we were at mess, the news came in that our troops had greatly strengthened their position on the Piave. Also, we had held the valley at Alano, where the enemy had hurled their full strength against us. This was the first piece of good news for over a month; so the general ordered champagne, and we drank to the victory. Afterwards, I went off with the C. O. to fetch Tea and her friend, and we smuggled them back to the house under our cloaks, keeping to the side streets all the time. Next morning, I found him and his orderly in a great stew, being engaged in packing up all their belongings; the order to leave had come at last. So I packed up too, and closed the house; and that same evening, the whole Division started off for Bassano.

We halted for a few days in a little country place just outside of Bassano. The officers had a villa to themselves, and the men found billets as best they could among the peasants. One morning, I went to see my C. O. about a piece of work that had just

been finished, and found him sitting there being shaved by his orderly. Every now and again, he would let out a curse, doubtless meaning to convey to me that the relations between master and man were not to be affected by the fact that they came from the same village. Suddenly, there on the little table beside the looking-glass, I caught sight of something vaguely familiar and pleasantly associated with my boyhood. It was a perfume-spray that used to stand on my mother's dressing-table. Then I saw a hair brush that belonged to us, too, and a small celluloid powder-box. I found myself trembling with rage.

"Those are mine," I said.

He did not appear concerned.

"This bastard Michele must have taken them by mistake," he said.

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when I saw a red woolen blanket with black stripes that had been thrown over the bed, a famous blanket, one that I had been particularly fond of all through my boyhood.

"Another mistake, eh?"

The face of the Neapolitan lieutenant took on an injured expression behind its soap-barrage.

"I can't help it," he said, "he put it on the bed,"—with a jerk of his head in the direction of the orderly, whose features contrived to express blankness and duplicity, at one and the same time, giving his master to understand, more plainly than by any words, that he was only too glad to take all the blame; and all the while he was busy figuring up in his mind what he was to get out of it.

"That's a nice way to return hospitality."

The orderly doggedly replied that a French artilleryman had made him a present of the blanket, that the French artillery used no other kind, and that I had made a mistake.

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"But can't you understand, I know it by the smell? I slept under it for years."

But he kept on in his flat Neapolitan accent, assuring me that I was making a mistake. I was getting angrier every minute.

"I'll talk to the general," I shouted, "I'll have you court-martialled," and I went out in a fury. I was still trembling with anger when I got back to my room.

"Talk about the Austrians." I said to myself. "Hate begins at home."

I felt that the war was a stupid and a ridiculous affair. But I could not stay angry for very long among these objects that seemed to breathe the very atmosphere of my own home, and I was soon calm enough to reflect that the war on thieves was as old as humanity itself, and that I was mixing up two things that had nothing to do with each other.

I couldn't take my eyes off the red blanket. Looking at it, I felt myself slipping back into the past, into the other world of my childhood. Sitting there, waiting for the climb up the Grappa, and with all my treasures about me, I could almost imagine myself at home again. I would keep them with me always. There was a knock at the door. The C. O.'s shave was over. He had come to apologize for his orderly.

"Surely, you don't want to make trouble over a wretched blanket. He'll get sent to the trenches, and he has a wife and children. Can't you leave him to me? I'll give him something that'll teach him to keep his hands off what doesn't belong to him."

He was oozing reconciliation. There was only one way to get rid of him.

"You needn't trouble," I said coldly, "I've forgiven him long ago."

He understood there was nothing more to be said, but he paused at the door.

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"As soon as leave starts, if you'd like to let your orderly off, you know you have only to say the word..."

"Thanks," I replied, "he's done nothing to deserve it."

He stood there for a second, and I saw come over his face a look of bewilderment, deepening into an expression of fear that he was powerless to conceal. Then he disappeared for good.

(Translated from the Italian by S. B. Beckett.)

QUIET MIDDAY IN THE ALPS

by

Antonio Fogazzaro.

*The white sky sleeps;
the wind, tired,
sighs and is still.*

*Between the woods and the pale
meadows lies
the leaden lake.*

*The giant mountain,
stretched on the plain,
watches in silence.*

*Faint— faint— I hear,
from distant herds,
the tinkle of bells.*

(Translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam.)

CHILD AND VEGETABLES

by

William Carlos Williams.

*The fire of the seed is in her pose
upon the clipped lawn, alone*

*before the old white house
framed in by great elms planted there*

*symmetrically. Exactly in the center
of this gently sloping scene,*

*behind her table of squash and green
corn in a pile, facing the road*

*she sits with feet one by the other
straight and closely pressed*

*and knees held close, her hands
decorously folded in her lap. Precise*

*and mild before the vegetables,
the mouth poised in an even smile*

*of invitation— to come and buy,
the eyes alone appear — half wakened.*

*These are the lines of a flower-bud's
tight petals, thoughtfully*

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*designed, the vegetable offerings
in a rite. Mutely the smooth globes*

*of the squash, the cornucopias
of the corn, fresh green, so still,*

*so aptly made, the whole so full
of peace and symmetry...*

*resting contours of eagerness
and unrest—*

I GIOVANI

(Notes on Contemporary Italian Literature)

by

Samuel Putnam.

I

Contemporary Italian literature—by which is understood, broadly, Italian literature from 1900 to 1925 or 1930—would appear, during the past year, to have been going through a period of very serious stocktaking, and the student or curious reader equipped with a knowledge of the language will find a number of important works of recent date the avowed object of which is to sum up the era, in critical or anthological form.

Possibly, the most ambitious attempt is Signor Camillo Pellizzi's *Le Lettere italiane del nostro secolo* ("Italian Letters in Our Century"), published at Milan, last year. A professor in the University of London, the author speaks from a certain vantage-point which, many will assure one, is not to be disdained at the present moment, in dealing with any Italian theme. Whatever the truth as to this,—and that there is another side to the question, there would seem, to the qualified observer, to be little doubt,—Signor Pellizzi appropriates the right to a freedom of pessimistic statement. While his impressive volume of 535 pages is filled with, literally, hundreds of names and works, and while there is, throughout, a serious and competent if somewhat academic attempt at a placement of men and forces, with a due giving of credit and bestowal of praise in individual cases, the

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conclusion of the whole matter is such as to cause one to wonder: why the 535 pages?

"To sum it up," declares the professor, "a living *Italian* literature, when one views the scene with some subtlety and from close up, does not exist."

Comes now Giuseppe Ravagnani's *I Contemporanei*, published (Turin, 1930) in the erudite Arturo Fari-nelli's *Letterature Moderne* series. The Ravagnani volume bears the significant subtitle, "*Dal tramonto dell' Ottocento all' alba del Novecento* (From Nineteenth-Century Sunset to Twentieth Century Dawn)." The subtitle is significant for the reason that it represents that effort at adjustment between the two centuries which has been one of the problems of the past thirty years, and which continues to be a problem. At the "sunset," we encounter such figures as D'Annunzio, Pirandello, Deledda, Negri, Guido da Verona, etc.; in the period between "sunset" and "dawn," there are Borgese, Papini, Ardengo Soffici and his neoclassicism, Zanfognini and his mysticism, etc.; while at the "dawn," we have such writers as Angioletti, Comisso, Linati, Bacchelli, Onofri, Emilio Cecchi, Vergani, Malaparte, Saba and Montale. From this, it may seem that the present-century dawn is a bit retarded; but that, as will become further apparent, is in accord with the native view and feeling in the case. A modern Italian literature, one will be told, has only begun to live within the past five years.

In addition to these two recent chroniclers, there is the third edition (Milan, 1929) of Giuseppe Prezzolini's *La coltura italiana* ("Italian Culture"), first published in collaboration with Papini, in 1905. This work in its three editions is of interest as a record of the manner in which the first quarter of the century was seen by a mind which belongs essentially to the first fifteen years of that century.

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Turning from the critics to the anthologists, we come upon an extensive documentation in Pietro Gorgolini's *Italica: Prose e Poesie della terza Italia* published in four volumes, at Turin, 1928. For the war spirit, there is Cesare Padovani's *Antologia degli scrittori morti in guerra*, Florence, 1929. There are other collections, each with an interest of its own: Mario Gromo's *Scrittori contemporanei*, Turin, 1929; Augusto Castaldo's *Antologia critica estetica*, Florence, 1928; etc.; while the youngest generation is now greeting the anthology of *Scrittori nuovi*, or new writers, by Enrico Falqui and Elio Vittorini, with a preface by G. B. Angioletti.

Of the making of anthologies and the compiling of anthological critical tomes, there is, of course, no end. We are living, it may be, in an anthological age. But such works are always of assistance to the one who would form an estimate of an era; and in the case of Italy, there is a special significance in the manner in which the first quarter of the century has been set aside for microscopic study, with a nascent new literature dating, roughly, from 1925.

II

That there is a literary *rifioritura* taking place in present-day Italy, a new "*civiltà letteraria*" springing up, is indicated, for one thing, by the ardent public stimulation of writing endeavor, in the form of very substantial prizes, such, for example, as the 50,000 lire premio *La Stampa*. In the editorial comment in connection with the announcement of this prize, in *L'Italia letteraria*, we read:

"In the course of a five-year period which is not yet over, the fact has been established that a new Italian literature exists, or at least a young literature, boldly upshooting if not yet in full flower, one which,

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if not precisely optimistic, is yet endowed with sufficient self-confidence. The Italian public has come to sense the fact that Italian writers are alive, engaged in discussing and in writing books. And the literary prizes, which are acts of faith in the existence of a literature, have demonstrated to all that such a literature is there... a new and modern one, corresponding to the times."

Another indication of the presence of a new literature may be found in a new and distinctly young criticism that is springing up in Italy today, represented by such names as Burzio, Debenedetti, Leo Ferrero, Bontempelli, Franchi and Piceni. These men are engaged in discussing and threshing out problems that not only are novel but at times a trifle terrifying. There is also Gino Saviotti, with his deadly, Mencken-like onslaught upon the entire contemporary scene.

For things are not as they were; they are not the same since the War; there is a new spirit abroad, a spirit that is being ushered in, in Italy as elsewhere in the War countries, not so much by the generation of fighters, the men who were actually in the trenches or on the front lines, as by the younger men, the generation that has followed the fighters. We discover, it is true, a foreshadowing of the new spirit, a sense at least of the imminence of a new order, in the soldier-writers themselves, as in Nino Oxilia's lines:

*morto è il Passato, e con le baionette
stiamo uccidendo il Presente
per mettere in trono il Futuro.*

"The Past is dead, and we are slaying the Present with bayonets, to put the Future on its throne." Oxilia is one of those who fell, but before he died, he left the refrain: "*Viva, viva la Vita! Viva!*" The

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men in the trenches died thirsting for life; the new generation is doing its utmost to find life, in literature and in life.

War memories persist, inevitably, in many of the young writers of today, as in Comisso's tale, *Ritorno a casa*, in which a soldier returns to the memory-haunted home of his infancy, or as in another story, by Alberto Consiglio, entitled *Una Sera di Novembre*, to be found in the same number (December, 1929) of *Solaria*, a story which it would be worth any reader's while to look up. Yet it is, after all, not so much actual reminiscences of the War as it is a certain disorientation produced by the War that we may look for in "*I Giovani*." The youth of Italy, since the Armistice, has found itself in the midst of a moral and intellectual disorder which it has not been able wholly to resist. As Signor Pellizzi points out, the Italian theatre is the intellectual product of this profound disorientation, and as such, is a reflection and an expression of the period. The War, however, brought one blessing, in the form of a new and inner seriousness, a tendency toward a "return to order."

We shall not, then, expect to find the after-War literature quite the same in spirit or intent as that which preceded the struggle. Italian literary tendencies of the beginning of the century were rudely interrupted by the European tragedy, and a number of them died to live no more, being incapable of a resurrection amid the confusion that followed the close of hostilities. For the state of peninsular culture at the end of the last century and the beginning of the twentieth, the reader may be referred to Pellizzi's opening chapters or to Prezzolini; space does not permit of expansion here. As Pellizzi states, Italy is "saturated with decadent maladies, always apt to burst out again." If isms are a sign of sickness, there can be no doubt that Italy has had her share: *vocismo*,

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futurismo, *rondismo*, *lacerbismo*, etc., etc. A critic like Bontempelli even will tell us that there was no Italian literature for the first twenty years of the century. Whether or not there was, there are certain influences coming out of those barren decades with which the young of today must wrestle. There is, among others, the dominating influence of Benedetto Croce and, in particular, of his *Filosofia dello spirito*, a domination which is only to be compared with that of Carducci in the century preceding, or that of D'Annunzio. Not to be forgotten, either, is the humanism of Prezzolini, whose "*Io credo*" may hold a message for the American followers of Profs. Babbitt and More.

The young literature, nevertheless, is different. It is outstandingly marked, as is the literature of young Europe as a whole, by a certain confessional character. This confessional attitude is sometimes an ingenuous one, sometimes forced; but whatever it is, it is a reflection of a "spiritually problematic time" (the phrase is Consiglio's) and of the soul-torment of those born "under Victor Emanuele III." A whole generation has been accused of "cerebralism," "preciosity," "*calligrafismo*," etc.; yet, one of the most hopeful signs of the new era is an obvious deep-rooted opposition to dilettantism, with a new view of the dignity of writing—"sul serio". A sign of rejuvenation has been seen in the polemics of such a writer as Strapaese. In any event, there is an indubitable striving for a vital art, an art that shall be as lively and spontaneous as life itself; the world which the writer of today stands facing may be one with the feeling of a paradise lost, but it is one, still, not without its freshness of zest and its dramatic intensity—Nietzsche's "*Incipit comoedia*" is sometimes quoted. But while there is, unquestionably, "something heroic and mystic in the air" (Pellizzi), this world is not,

precisely, the one that Werther knew. As Consiglio insists, it is not dramatic in the Werther manner, but has a Storm and Stress that is all its own. There is evident an abjuration of earlier-century histrionics, a quest of something beyond mere lyrical experience and experiment, a search for a new freedom, an attempt to escape from the D'Annunzian epic, from the overlyric and the decadent, to a beckoning *vita nuova*. The success of such a work as Papini's *Storia di Cristo*, by way of instance, now seems a bit of "spectacular provincialism."

What relation do the young writers bear to their elders? For they are not without their roots; it would be a mistake to assume that they are. There is, on their part, no attempt at an absolute break with tradition and the past, as in the case of the French Surréalistes. And speaking of the Surréalistes, a desiderated parthenogenesis with them has not quite come off, and they have found themselves afflicted with a nostalgic craving for ancestors. The young Italian goes as far back as Leopardi, whom he associates with the foreign Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé in his ancestral gallery.

"We find ourselves," writes Alfonso Silipo, "with several centuries of civilization in our blood-stream, meaning that, for the first time, we are in a position to understand all the unrecognized and betrayed greatness of a Leopardi, who, in spite of everything and to this day, remains the one master from whom a truly modern Italy has something to learn."

Yes, Leopardi is one of the masters of the less-than-forty (rather than "*moins que trente*") generation, and there are others; but *i giovani* of the present are to be distinguished by the fact that they look upon their elders and precursors not so much as masters, but rather as explorers, path-finders. This is especially true of their attitude toward the *rondisti*, the members

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of the group, including Emilio Cecchi, the critic, Bacchelli, Baldini, Montano, the musician Bruno Barilli and the painter Armando Spadini, which gathered about Vincenzo Carderelli's monthly review, *La Ronda*, brought out in Rome from 1919 to 1923. We are here dealing, not with remote "ancestors," but with an after-the-War generation which already has so aged as to have become almost ancestral to the writers who have come up in the past five years. The trend of these youngest is in the general direction of the French Gide, Proust and Valéry and the Irish Joyce, by way of Italo Svevo, Joyce's friend. From *La Ronda* down to this group, of which Elio Vittorini may be regarded as the spokesman, and down to the young *solaristi*, or group about the Florentine review, *Solaria*, there is a line of descent which would seem to be fairly clear and straight, but which has been the subject of some debate among the historians of the decade. Silipo, for one, would trace the origin of present tastes and culture to the pages of *La Ronda*. That magazine had a definite relation to the milieu out of which it grew, and in its humanity and the love of language and of style that is to be encountered among its contributors, may be seen the expression of the men who are now in their forties. For this reason, Silipo feels, all the best writers of today owe a debt to *La Ronda*. As for the pre-War-advance-guard,—such writers as Soffici and Palezzeschi,—how very distant and detached they now appear!

The question of foreign influence is a vexing one in Italy. The question was raised anew some months ago by Elio Vittorini, in an article entitled "*Scarico di coscienza* (Unburdening of Conscience)," contributed to *L'Italia letteraria*. Vittorini had much to say about the new and strange gods of the young, and what he had to say was not taken in good part by certain of his elders. This, however, by no means

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invalidates the assertion that the foreign influence—with a stress on the French. Gide and the *Nouvelle Revue française* group, as well as on Valéry—is a strong one. Italy long has manifested a lively curiosity toward the outside world—there is the influence of Dostoievski and the other Russians—and, in spite of all regionalism and nationalism, continues to do so. The feeling of middle-ground criticism at the moment is, as Angioletti (who published Vittorini's article) puts it, that foreign influence should serve to refine and enrich the native taste, but never as a guide for the latter.

All this brings up the equally vexed question, for the writing Italian of today, of "Europeanism." That the question is what might be called a burning one is indicated by the recent volumes and essays which have appeared on the subject, among which may be noted: Alberto Consiglio's *Europeismo* (Palermo, 1929); Raffaello Franchi's *L'Europeo sedentario* (Florence, 1929); etc. With it all, whatever the answer,—whether Stendhal's cosmopolite, Nietzsche's "good European," is to be realized south of the Alps or not,—there is a persisting love of native customs and traditions, a love that endures in an Italy the face of which is scarcely recognizable any longer to her slightly older sons, as we see from the preface to Angioletti's rather melancholy *Ritratto del mio paese* ("Portrait of My Country"). "Our" Europeanism, says the same author elsewhere, the Europeanism that is to be wished for, is one that shall have in it nothing of "the snobbish, the nebulous or the decadent."

On the other hand, there are the *Novecentisti*, or twentieth century group, led by Massimo Bontempelli, with their preachment of a "*reprise méditerranéenne*," of a European supremacy as a continuation of Mediterranean supremacy, with a new "Mediterra-

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nean music" to be born "out of the barbaric mélanges of jazz." Local, provincial and national possibilities, the novecentist believes, have been exhausted; there must be other fields to conquer, but it is the civilization which grew up on the shores of the Mediterranean that is to do the conquering; that civilization is the one that is to be perpetuated (cf. M. Valéry on this point). For this reason, and with this object in view, barriers of language must be broken down. The business of the artist is to create legends, to create the epic. There must be legends capable of being translated from one language into another, and the test of a really modern Novecentist or Twentieth Century work of art is, accordingly, its translatability. It was, therefore, in French, that the Novecentists began publishing their review, "900"; but after four numbers, they went back to Italian. In the meanwhile, some twenty Novecentists had banded together with the sworn object of producing, each of them, one true twentieth-century novel a year, computing that, at the end of twenty years, there would be twenty times twenty twentieth-century novels!

Outside of the Futurists, to whom, Marinetti and the rest, there clings an ineradicable before-the-War odor, and the Novecentists, there is a prevailing absence of schools in present-day Italy. There has always been a certain literary individualism (see Signor Ferrero's article), and the tendency as a whole is anthological rather than cliquish. This is to be observed in connection with such reviews as *Il Convegno*, published at Milan, and *Il Pegaso*, published at Florence, which are distinctly anthological in tone and character. The most interesting example, though the least anthological of all perhaps, is *Solaria*, where we have a "relative conformity" (*relativo conformismo*), along with the absence of a program and a certain almost extreme caution and slow maturation in the

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critical point of view, what is sought being a contemporaneity of expression and the play of a simultaneously motivated sensibility, the whole accompanied by a tendency to analysis and to a "*realismo illuminato*." The result is, not unnaturally, the bringing together of very diverse talents. Because of this or in spite of it, as one chooses to look at the matter, the pages of *Solaria* are, for this writer, among the most interesting reading to be met with in contemporary Italy.

Out of it all, there emerges a search for a narrative form which shall be at once modern and highly Italian; and it is possible that a flowering of this quest is to be discovered in such young writers as Moravia and Soldati, while a perennial and hardy lyricism blooms in Loria and Bonsanti. Moravia, who recently astonished a fragmentary age by bringing out a 400-page novel, *Gli Indifferenti*, is looked upon by some as an exponent of nineteenth-century *verismo*, with roots going back to Zola, Flaubert and De Maupassant, even though his work has not been untouched by Svevo, Proust and Joyce, and is animated by an undeniably modern sensitivity.

Other men other modes, and quite other reactions. There is Achille Campanile, who may be taken as a representative of a "snobbish modernity," or a modernistic *snobisme*. There is Cardarelli who, disillusioned with middle-class taste, has fled for refuge to the bosom of the people—cf. the recent French Populists, etc., etc. If in diversity there is hope, there is considerable hope for writing Italy of the year 1930. Her problems are likely to be her salvation.

ALMERIA

by

Aldous Huxley.

*Winds have no moving emblems here, but scour
A vacant darkness, an untempered light;
No branches bend, never a tortured flower
Shudders, root-weary, on the verge of flight;
Winged future, withered past, no seeds nor leaves
Attest those swift invisible feet. They run
Free through a naked land, whose breast receives
The whole fierce ardour of a naked sun.
Thou hast the Light for lover. Fortunate Earth!
Conceive the fruit of his divine desire.
But the dry dust is all she brings to birth,
That child of clay by even celestial fire.*

*Then come, soft rain and tender clouds, abate
This shining love that has the force of hate.*

THE FLYING COLUMN

FOREIGNER "It is inconvenient to deal with feeling
COMPLEX scientifically" is one of the quasi-
axiomatic utterances in Prof. Sig.

Freud's recent essay on *The Discomforts of Civilization*. The inconvenience is complicated by the frequent difficulty of discerning when manifestations are the result of feeling and when they are due to a defective sense of realities.

We do not like foreigners. If we liked them, we should not call them foreigners, to begin with. If we liked them, we might speak of them as Germans, Italians, Frenchmen, Americans or Englishmen, for the sake of differentiation, as we speak of Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, Scotsmen, Welshmen, and the like. When Southerners spoke of New Englanders as foreigners (and they still speak so on occasions), they meant not to be complimentary. When an American woman marries a Frenchman or an Englishwoman marries an Italian or an American, she is not likely to say that she is married to a foreigner or an alien. The term smacks of antagonism; it has the taint of contemptuous otherness; it implies incompatibility; a bending down from higher levels; at best only a pretence of equality, certainly an equality of sufferance only; an intercourse more or less venturesome; a necessity, more or less concealed, of being on the defence; an intimation, more or less crudely conveyed, of intrusion into the Delectable Mountains in Immanuel's Land. The sinister connotation is undeniable.

Recently, an American visitor to Great Britain objected to the classification of Americans as aliens. "We know"—a London paper reported him as saying—"this is a word you use in official documents, but we Americans don't like it. If you called us foreigners, we should have no complaint."

Why this touchiness? Is it on the grounds of euphony? If he had chosen a word so sweet under the palate as the Italian equivalent, *forestiero*, the distinction would

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have had merit. Is not the adjective in the classical and constitutional phrase, "inalienable rights", euphoniously almost perfect? Is that word's kernel less sonorous than foreigner? Unlikely. Or does the designation foreigner offer any greater pledge of spontaneity of treatment to the visitor? Finer amenities? A closer drawing together? Although the Revised Version, by an actual comparison of texts, mentions foreigners much more frequently than the German and French Bibles mention them, its injunction of hospitality reads "not to be forgetful to entertain *strangers*." It is silent as to foreigners. It is true, however, that this same Revised Version tells us that "the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your winedressers." But a short absence from home should not make our touchy fellow-countryman forget that a certain constitutional amendment has excised half of the sting, and our mechanical age effectively extirpated the other half. Delving a little deeper into the biblical treasure house, does not the Holy Book say: "Of a foreigner thou mayest exact again"? "A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof"?

No, fellow-countryman, as between foreigner and alien, it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. You are reported to have said: "If we were in John Bull's place, we would spend a few dollars in printing some new Custom House forms, and we would substitute the word "foreigner" for "alien" on the printed notices on your piers and railway platforms."

We can offer you a nobler text to shout from the house tops, if you must have a mission and must have a text: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners; but fellow citizens with saints, and of the household of God." Not that it will be heeded any more.

* * * * *

We have touched in passing on the variations between the English and the French and German texts of the Scriptures. It is curious, indeed, to note how in the majority of instances the two latter tone down the harshness of the concept or avoid entirely the use of the word foreigner or alien. The French, it is true, have no pat equivalent. Their translation is generally *étranger*,

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"stranger," but in one instance we find *voyageur*, and in two other places *gens de dehors*, where the Revised Version uses foreigner or alien. The Italians, singularly enough, give, in popular parlance, a more lenient, more amicable sense to *forestiero* (foreigner) than to *straniero* (stranger).

Luther in his version of the Bible uses *Ausländer*, we believe, in three instances, one of them in lieu of foreigner, the other two for alien. Once he employs *unbekannt* (unknown) in place of alien, and in Exodus XII. 45, the inspired image *Beisass* (the "by-sitter", if one may put it this way) for foreigner. In another place in Exodus, he puts the English rendering to ignominious shame by the generous use of *Gast* (guest) for foreigner. —How is one to account for this obsessive use of the deprecatory foreigner by the English speaking peoples, uninterruptedly from the Jacobean generation to this? Would Prof. Freud volunteer to adumbrate the complex?

* * * * *

In the same essay from which was taken the opening sentence of these paragraphs, Prof. Freud wonders how it is that there are men to whom their contemporaries do not deny respect, despite the fact that their greatness reposes on characteristics and performances which are utterly foreign to the aims and ideals of the people. It was Novalis who said somewhere: "*Das Publikum ist eine geheimnisvolle Person.*" There is supposed to be a mass psychology, and there are those who pretend to fathom it. But like dealing with feelings on a scientific basis, examination of group psychology is full of pitfalls, and not a very convenient piece of business at best, since what one would be apt to regard as a psychological phenomenon is as likely as not to turn out to be nothing more than lack of group judgment.

This, à propos of the declared aim of the National Travel Association of Great Britain to attract American visitors to the United Kingdom. It is stated that 80% of American travellers to Europe fail to visit Great Britain. The National Travel Association feels much perturbed over such a state of affairs. It has placed at its head an illustrious personage, Lord Derby. Just why Lord Derby, instead of a well-trying practical advertising

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expert, should have been given a post of that character is mystifying. However, there is Lord Derby, and there is the National Travel Association with its aims,—in themselves, laudable and legitimate enough. The association in question recently gave a luncheon to the British Passenger Agents' Association to devise ways and means of boosting the American tourist industry. And Lord Derby is reported to have said, in the course of a speech he delivered to the assembly: "We have got to make foreigners feel that when they come to this country, they are having the same attention and luxuries that they get in their own countries."

There you are, foreigners,—at the first go off! Only a malevolent imp could have prompted the speech.

* * * * *

France has recently created an under-secretaryship for Tourism, with M. Gaston Gérard as High Commissioner at its head. M. Gérard, after acceptance of the office, visited the various tourist centers throughout France, where he delivered numerous speeches. He made no secret of France's desire to attract to her shores all the tourists she can accommodate, and she has accommodation for quite a few. With the amiability of a prince of romance and the urbanity of a Lincoln, he spoke—not of *gens de dehors*—, but of what he came to discuss: tourists. The Germans, also, speak of *Fremdenverkehr* not of *Ausländerverkehr*.

But it is when his Lordship begins to grope for means whereby to attract the foreigners, and vouchsafes counsel as to how this had best be accomplished, that he challenges the experience of more successful countries. His suggestion, to give visitors hailing from America or elsewhere the same attention and luxuries which they get in their own countries, argues a celestial remoteness from a very uncelestial subject. Americans, meaning those who travel for pleasure, come to Europe pretty much for the same motives as, according to the late D. H. Lawrence, had led the Pilgrim Fathers to America: largely to get *away*. Away from everything. Americans get away for a *change*,—what could be simpler? If the change proves agreeable, the trip is considered a success, and the good news is as fleet of foot as the proverbial bad news.

THE FLYING COLUMN

In point of fact, travellers for pleasure generally expect better attention in the countries they visit than falls to their share at home. And, on the whole, we think that American visitors receive better attention in England than they do in America. It is certainly not lack of attention that keeps tourists away from England.

The supply of luxuries, which is the other requisite stressed by the noble speaker, will not bring them any quicker nor in any greater numbers. Do France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland or Austria provide them any more lavishly than Great Britain? We doubt it. What are those luxuries, anyway? We cannot think of any obtainable in America that could not be had in Great Britain or any of the western countries of Europe, for the matter of that. The contrary is more likely to prove true. The same could not be said concerning necessities, even those of the most elementary order,—necessaries corresponding to American standards, that is. No,—attention and luxuries won't turn the trick.

* * * * *

We have been wondering whether, at bottom, the reasons why "foreigners" visit the British Isles in lesser numbers than they do other countries, are not essentially the same as those which move Englishmen, year in and year out, and at all seasons of the year, to leave in traffic-disorganizing swarms their own shores for countries of Continental Europe. In a previous issue of *THIS QUARTER*, Prof. Hendrik Van Loon traced the origin of modern travel or tourism to the inspired efforts of that far-seeing Englishman, Thomas Cook. May it be hoped there will in due course arise another man of genius, the equal in all respects of the man we have been taught to follow ever since we were given an allowance to enjoy our first vacation away from mother's apron-strings, who will understand and solve, to the glory and profit of his country, the problem of mass importation of tourists to England, as Saint Thomas of yore so well succeeded in their exportation. But we doubt whether Thomas Cook got the armies of foreigners moving from the British Isles to feel that, when they came to another country, they were having the same attention and luxuries that they had got at home.

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To wind up, Lord Derby's advice lacks point. If that is the best he can offer, we fear that, even if the Channel were bridged and the project of the under-sea tunnel brought to a realization as a still further inducement, tourists would walk or be conveyed over the Channel bridge or through the Channel tunnel, and arriving at the cliffs of Dover, would halt just long enough to glimpse the country as it could be seen from where the bridge or tunnel left off, then turn sharp about and return to whence they came.

Merely this and nothing more.

(E. W. T.)

THE LIMIT

by

Kathleen Coyle.

At the back of the Maloney's house in Rathfarnham there was a small walled garden, very sheltered so that flowers lasted late in it.

On an early December day Teresa Maloney was sitting there in a wicker chair furnished with faded cretonne. She was a smallish woman and, wrapped in the old motoring coat that she had put on against the cold, she looked smaller than she really was. It was a very shabby coat with a rubbed leather lining. From the upturned collar her broad pale face looked like a flower—like one of the pale winter chrysanthemums rising out of brown leaves in the bed of earth beside her. Her black, oily looking hair ran away from a parting in broad waves, down over her ears. On the temples were two important splashes of white hair oddly resembling surf, as though the waves had truly broken there. Her eyebrows were thick and black and her eyes blue, blue and set wide. There was a little crooked bump on her nose and her left eye-tooth came down longer than the others and always showed between her shut lips. There was something fantastic, an always secretly amused expression in her mouth and eyes. She was sewing, holding up the corner of a piece of coarse material like tea-towelling in her tense tiny hands. Curled up on her feet, which were raised on a footstool, was a black and white cat.

It was tranquil in the garden. The air was bright and cold, but not too cold. It was perhaps half past

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twelve, and far away, beyond the sensation of coldness and brightness, there was a sense of food being cooked. Her husband came out from the house and down the path towards her. She saw clearly in the pure light how his red hair was turning golden. She thought he looked far too thin for his height. He stooped to kiss her. When his lips came close to her mouth she dropped her head suddenly so that his kiss came on her forehead.

"My throat aches," she said, holding her head away from him with an unexpected stiff gesture. She put her hand out, the hand with the thimble on and with her sewing finger she pushed a snail off the wall behind the chrysanthemums. She had an air of not knowing what she was doing when she pushed the snail and her thimbled finger stayed on the wall where the snail had been.

"Throat! Better take care" he burred.

"It doesn't ache much, exactly, but it's queer, it's..." She brought her hand down from the wall and looked at him with direct distraught eyes. "It feels choky..." Quickly she gripped his hand and held it and her face went suddenly flushed under its pallor. She looked, in a minute, all gone to pieces. "Oh! Jimmy!" Mad as lightning she whipped the handkerchief that was showing out of his coat pocket and held it against her lips. She held it there and it became red.

"My God, Tease!" He stood there, helpless, doing nothing, struck with horror, watching her effort to get rid of the blood. "Bridget! Bridget!" he called at the top of his voice. He took the handkerchief and turned it and wiped his wife's mouth. "Bring a glass of cold water, Bridget, quick, and run for Doctor Hal-loran, cold water! Tease! what can it be?" He had an idea and showed it: "An abcess maybe; it's been gathering, and now it's broken."

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She lay with her head back in the deep collar and her eyes closed. She continued to press the handkerchief against her mouth and wipe it.

The old woman came with the water. Teresa made a sign with her hand that she needed another handkerchief. Bridget went back to the house to get it. They waited without speaking, and almost motionless, for her return. Opening her eyes Tease saw the piece of stuff that she had been sewing. Neither it nor the cat had moved. She let the handkerchief drop on the ground and held the material against her mouth. The blood seemed to have ceased to come.

"Does it still pain you?"

She shook her head. Something impatient came into the motion of her hand.

"It was an abcess ..."

Bridget was there again. "Shall I go for the doctor ma'am?"

She shook her head feebly, and the impatience showed again.

"I told you to go. You must go."

"No, Jimmy."

"Yes dear, it's better. He'll give you a gargle."

Bridget ran up the path.

"Listen Tease, if it has stopped now, I'd like to carry you in. It's cold here. You've caught cold."

In an instant she opened her eyes and read him through. Her eyes went misty against him and she put her hand out on his arm to show that she was willing to be carried. He picked her up easily and one saw that he was strong and muscular under his thinness and that it was no effort. He carried her up the garden and into the warm kitchen where there was a smell of roasting meat. A bright red glow of heat shone from the kitchener.

"There! It's warm here, sit in Bridget's chair for

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a minute." He put her down on the windsor chair. "Do you want to get rid of your coat?" She nodded. He stooped and unbuttoned it and peeled it down off her like a shell. She became visible, neat and intact, like a tiny kernel. "Has it stopped?"

She wiped her lips thoroughly and let the piece of stuff fall out of her hand. "Yes." Her voice was terribly low. "I'd like some water." He got it for her. She stood up with the glass of water in her hand and went over to the sink and spat into an empty bowl. "It is finished, Jimmy... will you throw this out in the garden?" She gave him the bowl.

When he came back she was again sitting in the chair. "It was queer, Jimmy, hardly a pain at all, a sensation. It is over now. I am glad that it is over." She rubbed her face against his sleeve.

"You must take care, Tease. The doctor's sure to make you all right." In the silence, vegetables boiled in a saucepan and the roast spat in the oven.

"I feel so odd about it. I do not want to have the doctor."

"I know, darling, but it's better. It's better to be sure, to be careful. You've nothing to be frightened about."

She looked truly frightened when he said that. She put her hand into his. It was very tight and tense and felt like a knot in his until he closed over it. "It's not the doctor, Jimmy ... it's the blood. Do you know, it terrifies me! If it wasn't so ... so red. It's so red on the white." Suddenly she buried her face. "Burn that stuff, Jimmy, burn it!"

"I won't burn it. It'll make a smell. See... I'll put it away, I'll take it out. You won't see it any more."

He came back directly and put his arm around her. The cat was mewling at the door. Neither of them heeded it.

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"Jimmy!"

"Yes."

"I feel we ought to look at Bridget's roast. It may be burning to death."

He went down on his hunkers to open the oven door. "What must I do to it?"

"Baste it. Take a spoon and pour the gravy over it. Look! There's the spoon on the table that Bridget's been using."

He was basting it when Bridget came in. "The doctor won't be back till after lunch. They've promised to send him round before he takes the patients. He'll come immediately."

Tease sat at the luncheon table eating nothing. Jimmy ate heartily with an air of making little of the present anxiety and of being full of spirits. He told her all about a new case he had, a will case with a very interesting psychology. When it came near the time for the doctor's visit she begged him not to wait. She wanted him to return to his office early. He refused her.

She became direct: "I don't want you to be there. I want to be alone with him."

"Righto! You shall be alone with him. I'll go down the garden and pick worms. But I must know what he says."

He was there, fidgeting with the chrysanthemums, his thin fingers moving amidst the blooms that were not much bigger than Michaelmas daisies, when Doctor Halloran found him.

"Well George!" They had known each other for years.

"She hasn't been well lately?"

"Well as anything until to-day. This was quite sudden. It happened like that!" He snapped his fingers.

"But she hasn't been herself?"

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"Oh I think so! Not so lively, perhaps." She had, when he came to think about it, been sitting about rather much.

"Well, Jimmy, I have not told her, but... it's cancer, and I'm not quite sure if we can operate." He plucked a flower and concentrated on it, avoiding Jimmy's eyes.

"My God, Tease!"

Everything was said in the silence.

"There is just a chance that we can operate. I must make sure. I'd like Galbraith to see her."

"Yes. You haven't told her ...?"

"Of course not! She mustn't even guess. You must pretend that it's nothing. Be as cheerful as you can. Don't let her see."

"My God! Good God! George ... Tease!"

* * * * *

During the next three nights Teresa did not sleep well. She tossed about terribly. On the morning of the fourth day she said to her husband that she would like to sleep alone. So that night Jimmy slept on a stretcher bed beside her. He slept soundly and when he woke in the morning she was asleep and he dressed quietly without waking her. She woke when he was putting on his collar in front of the mirror, with his back to her. The sleep slipped out of her eyes as she became aware of him and the "laughing secretly" expression seemed to leap in her face as she took in the absurdity of his tall lanky form with the braces crossed on his bulging shirt and his collar standing out in great flaps up to his ears. He pulled it forward and fastened it and then suddenly she screamed and the flaps leapt up again. He turned to her.

"Jimmy! Look, look! Oh, hide it quick, hide it!" She was showing him a large red stain on the turned

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back sheet : " ... and on the pillow too! It must have been while I slept. Hide it! Hide it!"

* * * * *

The hemorrhage recurred during the morning. The doctor came and ordered her to stay in bed all day. Bridget changed the sheets and the pillow slips. In the afternoon there was another hemorrhage which came with such suddenness that the clean sheets were stained before she could prevent it. Bridget telephoned to Jimmy and he came home at once.

She was sitting up against the pillows when he entered, smiling at him as though she had really seen him coming down the road and had been waiting to greet him. He went over and sat down beside her on the bed with his arm around her.

It was tranquil in the room, with gleams of fire-light. The window was open a little top and bottom. Outside, a troop of sparrows were shouting with rasped throats for bread and circuses. Her voice seemed very low and harmonious in comparison. "I'm glad you're there ... it makes me afraid ..."

"Don't mind it Tease, don't mind it! You'll be all right presently."

His great hand which seemed all metacarpal bones was entwined in her two small ones. "If I didn't see it, Jimmy ..." She looked up at him, the tiny white spot of her exposed eye-tooth was shining and there was a fantastic mirth in her eyes. "Couldn't you get me red-as-scarlet sheets and then, you see, I should be made whiter than snow?"

He took her quite seriously : "Why, of course. I'll go down to Parry's at once and get him to make you some."

"He'll take months. You know what Parry is. He'll have the lambs shorn specially and specially

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dyed ... dyed in the blood of the lamb ... Oh, Jimmy, do laugh! You must laugh!"

"Tease! Tease!" His arm tightened round her shoulders. They were quiet in the firelight together, waiting. Waiting.

"I've got a splendid idea. We can have scarlet tops made, half the depth of the sheet ... I couldn't bleed enough to reach to the foot of the bed ..."

He got up with a jerk and strode to the door. "Bridget! Bridget!" He came back in a second, quite calm, smiling at her.

"What do you want Bridget for?"

"I'd like a cup of tea."

"At three o'clock?"

"Well, it isn't every day that I'm home at three. Can't I have a cup of tea in my own house ... at three o'clock?"

"Why, of course! You may even have two cups of tea, three! Three at three o'clock!"

* * * * *

They decided to operate. Jimmy had the sheets done at Parry's and brought them home himself with half a dozen silk pillow slips. She was like an excited child for whom a party had been made, when she was decked out in them, wearing an old Chinese red dressing-gown that had been long ago discarded. She sat up straight and gay against the pillows, laughing at Jimmy: "Oh! How very gruff your voice is, Grandmother, and what great hands you've got!"

* * * * *

They operated. Jimmy saw her coming out of the ether. She was in agony and she looked at him as if she knew everything and how it was all going to end and it was no good. The nurse saw how unbearable it was to him and put him out of the room. "She

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is not quite conscious. They are always like that. It is the ether. She will be better after she has slept."

He saw her again asleep. She was strangely quiet to him, not moaning any longer. Her face was sharply cut out against the red pillows, deepened into them by the shadow of her hair, her deep black hair with the white splashes like the breast of a bird. She lay like a bird when it falls in the frost ...

* * * * *

She could not bear the nurse so they had to send her away and have a daily one who came in whenever her throat needed dressing.

There were no more hemorrhages but she had begun to suffer a great deal. At first it was the after-pain of the operation, but as the weeks went on, the pain grew instead of lessening.

Jimmy lay every night in the stretcher beside her and gradually he began to hear her moaning. He slept at first because she moaned very quietly so as not to waken him. But the pain became stronger than her will and in the end she moaned without caring whether it was loud or not. She did not know. He would spend hours trying to smooth her.

George Halloran said that they would have to give her morphia.

"That means that she is going to die?"

"She will suffer less."

She did not suffer less.

It was the limit one night when she said,—he was sitting on her bed with half of her in his arms—"I'd rather the bleeding came back."

He told George.

"It will come back."

"Then the pain will go?"

"You never can tell."

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Seven weeks after the operation she had a crisis. It was terrible to witness. Dawn found Jimmy torn and unnerved, a rag of a man keeping vigil. The morphia had failed. The truth was that she had enough to kill her. And then, quite suddenly, she slept. It seemed incredible to Jimmy. He leaned over and touched her cheek with his finger and when he took his finger away it was red. He drew himself back stiffly, afraid of making a blunder, even with his breath, that might wake her. He tip-toed out of the room.

* * * * *

Bridget caught him on the bottom stair. "You must have a cup of tea, sir."

He shook his head. His eyes were wild, and he kept wiping his mouth. "She's asleep. For God's sake don't wake her! Don't make a sound, I warn you. You'd better shut up the cat. Is the cat shut up?"

"Yes. Yes. The cat's safe."

He went to the front door and opened it noiselessly.

Bridget crept after him: "You're not surely going out?"

He waved her away, into oblivion, with his hand.

"But you can't, it's raining, it's raining like mad."

He paid no attention. He went out of the door, on to the step sideways, like an escaping thief.

"Here ..." she ran after him in her slippers and thrust an umbrella into his hand. "You'll be drenched to the bone. Take this." She waited until he took it and then turned in out of the rain. She had a glimpse of him, fumbling over the gate latch, the umbrella still unopened, before she shut the door.

* * * * *

He turned down the road and went past George

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Halloran's darkened windows, past the house where the crazy countess lived, and crossed over by the district grocer's. Round the corner from the grocer's a couple of boys were unpacking a crate of eggs. They stopped when they saw him:

"Oh Holy suffering Wilduck look at the zany!"

"Hold it up higher, mister!"

"Tie your handkerchief on it!"

"Hit me with it!"

He stopped before them, arrested. A mixture of pain and consciousness filled into his expression. His wild eyes came to rest in this misery, and then he strode on.

"Oh, Cheeses! The sun'll blind you, mister! Pull it down across your eyes. Oh, Cheeses!"

He went on from them, steadily, heedless. He met an old woman in a cape that was put on over her bonnet and came down to her ankles. She stopped right in front of him, and from somewhere in her bosom she moved fat agitated red fingers. "My poor man, is it crazy you are, or is it drink?"

"No! No! It's my wife, ma'am ... she is dying of cancer." He moved round her and she moved with him.

"But all the same now," she reasoned, "you could open that umbrella and not hold it up so ridiculously. Man dear, you'd think it was a flagstaff you were carrying. Open it, you'll be soaked to the skin."

"That is a thing that I do not intend to do. I am going to hold it up like this ..." he held it higher, "to be jeered and mocked at and spat upon, as an act of sacrifice to God to beseech him to have pity on my wife ... she is in torment ..."

"Holy Mary! Holy Mother of God!" She stood looking after him with fingers moving like coarse red flowers in her bosom.

The traffic thickened as he approached Portobello

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Bridge. People stared and some of them stopped but he got away from them into the scurrying line going across the bridge. The Liffey ran fast with the wind, thickened and muddy and full of drift. On one of the quays men were busy unloading a string of barges packed with turf that had come down from the mountains. The turf resembled great dark brown woolly caterpillars at the edge of the turbulent yellow water. Over the bridge the pavement was diminished by the market stalls, which had begun to put out their provisions and were already thronged with early morning customers. Jimmy got jammed in the crowd. He escaped notice amidst the welter of other, opened, umbrellas. A motor lorry came rattling down the street with such speed and force that, when it reached the narrow part, the people against the provision stores and the open booths were welded into one mass. Jimmy was pushed up close against the stomach of a fat woman. "Go easy!" she yelled at him.

He could not go easy for he was powerless to move backwards or forwards. And then, suddenly, from somewhere between Jimmy and the fat woman and their tight neighbours, a cauliflower emerged.

"Is it stealing my cauliflower you are?"

"Cauliflower!" Jimmy repeated.

"Oh! He's going to hit me!"

"Put down the umbrella!"

"I cannot put it down. I am doing this for my wife who is ..."

"Put down the umbrella."

The lorry was past, and the mass of marketers loosened. The bodies of the women rippled away from Jimmy as though he had been a stone flung in the midst of them.

"He's mad!"

"I'm not mad ..."

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"He took the cauliflower out of my bag."

A newspaper-boy had stopped on his bicycle at the kerb and a big burly policeman was bearing down upon them.

"Here, you get along out of this, Mister!"

Jimmy stepped out into space. He raised the umbrella as high as it would go, and standing out in the cleared circle he declared:

"I am doing this for my wife ..."

"Here! You get out of this, Mister. Get along home!"

"This is good enough for a stop-press!"

"Pardon me," said a white-haired old man with a gentle air, "allow me!" He put a hand on Jimmy's shoulder as one might touch a child who had strayed, "where do you want to go to? I'll take you there? I shall be very glad to accompany you."

Jimmy stared at him, wild and bewildered. "Yes, you are quite right. I must go home. I must go home to my wife who is dying of cancer. She is dying of cancer, I tell you. Dying. You cannot conceive the extent of her suffering ..."

The gentle old man directed him firmly towards a small grey Ford and practically pushed him into it. "Where do you live?"

Jimmy gave him the address; then he stood up in the car and waved the umbrella at the crowd that had gathered and gathered and become a blur of umbrellas, spreading like gigantic wet leaves over curious queerly lit faces: "I am doing this for my wife who is dying of ..." the car moved off, Jimmy's last word was a shriek : ... "CANCER!"

* * * * *

"Yes," said Bridget, "she's still asleep."

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"There's, I think, a taxi ..." he made a vague gesture, "will you pay the man?"

Tease was lying as he had left her. Daylight shone in two parallel lines across the room escaping from between the narrow blind and the window frame.

He went down on his knees: "I thank you, God. I thank you, God!"

She was lying so very still, fixed like wax into the scarlet, whiter than snow against the scarlet and her sleep was deep...

SONNET

by

Maurice English.

*This dead man has his mood, a private one,
hard to be riddled, hidden underground,
devoid of sunsets, empty of the sun:
a silence never lapsing into sound,
nerveless as quiet waters, presses deep
something of irony, a certain doubt
in eyes that questioned, could not win to sleep,
and lips that never flung the answer out.*

*He held it likely that the grave might bring
some sort of answer to a question set:
"Am I" (his metered syllables still sing)
"a creditor, a debtor, or a debt?"
Irony in the dust, and wondering
whether he's answered— or is waiting yet.*



Isamu Noguchi
1930

Drawing, by Isamu Noguchi.

THE HAPPY MAN

by

William Soutar.

*I knew a man, but none the place
Where he may rot: it were disgrace
To dig a pit for such a one
And bind him to a single stone.*

*He seem'd the presence of our shire;
Breath of its breath, mould of its mire,
Shap'd by winds redolent, or rude,
And cradl'd in the songful wood.*

*Oft-times the villagers have heard
Him answer to the cuckoo bird,
Or on some unfrequented height
Whistle the dog-star down the night.*

*Nor storm, nor rain, nor wintry stress
Exil'd his native happiness,
Which made a friend of frost and flood
Until the bursting of the bud.*

*Unto the shire-folk he became
A voice, a genius, a name;
For rarely was his body seen
In converse on the village green.*

*Men, who have met him, say his words
Were wayward as the winging birds
He lov'd: a madness or the speech
Only a little child might reach.*

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*For years he roam'd the fields and woods
Or up the mountain solitudes,
Where his shy cuckoo, note on note,
Cries— but there is no answering throat.*

*None, who had known him, know the place
Where he may rot: it were disgrace
To dig a pit for such a one
And bind him to a single stone.*

BLOUAUGH !

OR ROMPSING WITH THE WHIMSIGISTS.

by

Anne Howe.

*Good Christ what is
a poet—if any
exists?*

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, in
Imagist Anthology, 1930.

None but the late Lewis Carroll or his prodigious progeny, Alice in Blumberland, could possibly do justice to the merry and amazing little compilation that confronts one in the *Imagist Anthology*, 1930, from the presses of the highly-to-be-respected Messrs. Chatto and Windus, London. *

That word, "compilation," merely slipped out through the fissure of an innate and insuperable courtesy on our part; or possibly, it is due to a congenital dislike of stepping on fuzzy-wuzzies. A better word, doubtless, could be found—say, "coagulation," if that did not imply the presence of too many red corpuscles; for this "anthology" (hic) is about the worst case of splurnicious anemia that we have seen—blood-count 'way below 30—feed 'em liver, Doc, feed 'em liver! They've given us goose-flesh.

Kindness wins by a neck. We'll call it "compilation."

* Also Covici-Friede, New-York.

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But who the compiler? Hist! We scent—nay, more, we snort and sneeze a MYSTERY. That no one should feel like coming out and taking the credit for the thing is, of course, readily understandable. That would be equivalent to stepping up to a bobby and remarking: "Arrest me, officer; I picked the lidy's pocket." Aunt Sapphira says she is quite sure it was just thrown together, hasty-like, by the hired girl; but Oscar, our pet canary, impresses us as being much more discerning when he observes that it was probably put together by the typist. After all, it reads like it.

There is, it is true, the venerable Mr. Ford Madox Ford in the front. Mr. Ford is usually in the front; he has a good bulky frame to stand behind; and what is more, he is the kindest soul on earth. One feels certain that, if he were to come upon Düsseldorf's famous "Jack" at work upon a victim, he first would stand between the victim and the "Ripper," and then, in all probability, would sit upon the latter as the *polizei* passed. It is a way he has. He is really quite hopeless—irredeemably benevolent—and broad-backed. And he surely does a good job of sitting in the present instance. By so doing, he contrives to keep this "anthology" from being about the most humorless compilation in literary history.

There is, as has been said, Mr. Ford, and there is also one Mr. Glenn Hughes; but the latter name, though its possessor speaks as one having great authority, means, we must confess, absolutely nothing to us—ab-solutely nothing; and our wonderment, unlike the zero of our enlightenment, is stubbornly static—it declines to approach infinity.

* * * * *

A quaint little volume, this, nevertheless. Its

ANNE HOWE

yellow cover and yellow jacket somehow wing us back—and back—and back—. It is like the jaundiced ghost of forgotten yesterdays, when Aubrey Beardsley was the last word in naughtiness, when the late James McNeil was uttering wisecracks stolen from Baudelaire which he was to accuse poor sad Oscar of stealing from him,—when, in short, things were humming, by hum! There is, indeed, a faintly delicious flavor of the antique to the thing; and any one who likes that sort of thing will like this sort of thing, and if you don't like this sort of thing—etc.

Nothing is so funny as the self-created advance-guards (as advance-guards are always self-created) of yesteryear. It is like going up into the attic on a rainy afternoon and dressing up in great-grandmother's hoop-skirts. It is like a picture of grandma in her wasp-waist and balloon-sleeves of the bicycle era, or a vision of mother in her hobbles. Imagism, if we must classify it with critical exactitude, belongs to the era of "peg-top" trousers and the hobble-skirt, when "horseless carriages" were beginning to turn into "automobiles," and no one was certain whether the accent was on the ultimate or the penultimate syllable. It belongs, we have said, to this period; but its roots, as that yellow cover hints, go back further yet—to the days of the New Woman and the tandem.

For "this slender and lovely little Movement" (I quote the wholly admirable Mr. Ford) was, though its ballyhooers were—and are to this day—blissfully unconscious of the fact—not an "advance" movement at all, but a dyed-in-the-wool reaction. As a "movement" (don't you love that word!), Imagism was just about as modern as Cascarets: merely a new coating to a very ancient effect. A few lads and lasses with a knowledge of Greek got together with a few lads and lasses with less knowledge of Greek and others with no knowledge of Greek at

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all, and—*voilà!* the “movement” was on—just look at all the Pans and fauns and nymphs and satyrs gambolling over the “modernistic” greensward —

There is a poet lying on his back in a hospital in Bassano. He is an Italian, but he is one of the best poets America has produced since the War. Emmanuel Carnevali is desperately ill, but he still has enough thunder left in him to blow up the whole prating Imagist brigade—if he had not already done it, and done it thunderingly well, ten years or more ago, in one annihilating review which somehow found its way into Miss Harriet Monroe’s staid organ. I regret that I am unable at the moment to quote more at length from that review, but one four-word phrase stays with me. “Mouldy reminiscences of Pan”: that seems to say it all.

This is not to say that there was not a real poet or two mixed up in all this neo—and belated—Swinburnian blather. H. D. happens to be a very finely chiseled specimen. Amy Lowell, if not precisely a poet, remains one of America’s leading cerebrationists in verse. William Carlos Williams is essentially a modern who, in his budding youth, chanced to be drawn in with the Whimsigists; if we regard Joyce and Pound as we should regard them, as continents thrown up, and which might have been thrown up in any company if not in any age, then—but let’s not be invidious. Aside from the comparatively timeless H.D., Joyce and Pound, Williams, at least, is distinctively of the present and the future rather than of the past,—he is, in other words, not “modern” (word long since rendered meaningless by the provincial reviewer) but contemporary, in the full spiritual signification of that term. As for some of the others, shall we draw a kindly veil over them? After all, they were doing their best to get along.

As for the content of the term, “Imagism,” no one

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to my awareness has succeeded in discovering any that says anything new. I am inclined to defy Ezra himself upon this head. Mr. Ford informs us that "poetic ideas are best expressed by the rendering of concrete objects" and that "all creative prose like all imaginative verse is Poetry." But this is scarcely new; and there is such a thing as abstract poetry, just as there is abstract painting. As for all creative prose's being poetry, that again is not novel—see, e.g., M. Rimbaud. It is a question of intoxication, *and* intoxications, of the number of Pernods to which a writer reacts and the modus of his reactions. When a man is intoxicated, he commonly sees things; and those things are altogether likely to be concrete things, images. And when he describes what he sees to others, he is likely to talk in images. Poetry is, simply, the point where the D.T.'s are reached. If this be startlingly novel,—pour us another Pernod!

(But, dear reader, be assured: you are not in any danger of becoming intoxicated with what you find between these yellow covers, though the soporific prose of certain verse you will find there may induce another effect. One wonders, sometimes, why the author insisted upon cutting it up into lines.)

* * * * *

We have spoken of those "others" who were trying to get along. Some of them are still trying to get along. One suspects that is why this "anthology" was got together. There are times when the alphabet covers many sins. There is a tendency, for one thing, to play down Amy Lowell, although Miss Lowell stood for Imagism to America. She, unfortunately, is no longer in a position to protest. Instead, Mr. Ford gives us, very delightfully, much about Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism, what not. This,

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while providing good entertainment, tends to blur the picture.

Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism—ah! how it takes us back to our youth, when people really believed in “movements” and “advance-guards” and all that sort of thing. We are irresistibly reminded of something which Mr. Forbes Watson recently had to say, *à propos* of Chicago. “The oldest Chicagoan,” Mr. Watson assures us, “is as keenly alive to modern art as the youngest New Yorker is to contemporary art.” The Imagists are the Oldest Inhabitants in the current instance. Speak to a young European of today of a movement or *avant-garde*, and he will laugh in your face. Pallid little pre-War aestheticisms, as demoded now as Cezanne’s apples beside a Max Ernst engraving. Not aesthetics, but life. Not aesthetes, as M. Delteil observes, but angels. The War, luckily, killed many things. There is a new word in the air, and it is a lot better word than Images. That word is Magic. Williams has it:

*Swing—ride
walk
on wires—toss balls
contort yourselves—*

As for our dear old by-gone friends, the Whimsigists:

*wheeeeeeee
clacka tacka tacka
tacka tacka
wha ha ha ha ha
ha ha ha*

Or, in conclusion:

*Yes
it's wonderful but they
ought to*

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put it
back into the sea where
it came from.
Blouaugh!

We take it all back. The present compilation (not, for heaven's sake, to be confused with a recently published *Anthology of Bad Verse*) is worth reading. It has given us one good poem, pp. 129ff.



EDITORIAL NOTE: Anne Howe slangs and strafes much, but not always justly. Nor does she slang and strafe when she should. One must agree with her when she refuses to see anything new in Mr. Ford's statement that "all creative prose, like imaginative verse, is Poetry," without, however, going so far as to endorse the new-fangled notion fostered by contemporary novelists, that they, with the poets, are the only cocks of the walk in creative writing. If this were so, we would either have to exclude writers on philosophy and history, essayists and economists, who are also writers of creative prose when they are not merely critics or compilers, or we would have to class them among the poets. All this provided that any one has ever formulated a lucid definition of what is meant by "creative prose." The German *Dichter* has always been understood to mean a writer of imaginative prose as of verse, or of both. Shelley defined poetry as "the expression of the imagination," *tout court*.

We feel that Mr. Ford merits a dose of strafing for saying that "poetry is a matter of rendering, not comment. You must not say: 'I am so happy'; you must behave as if you were happy..." But why may not a poet comment? If "I am so happy" be impermissible comment, are not the Fordian phrases in his own poetry, "I am so fevered" or

"... I was so glad
With a mad gladness..."

or H.D.'s "I am so free," as much comment as "I am so happy,"—neither of them showing a corresponding behaviour? Comment is an unhappy choice for such a master of English as Mr. Ford.—May it not be suggested that what Mr. Ford probably meant to say was that a poet should be deducible rather than oracular, a distinction that can be patly exemplified by the supposititious case of a witness who, were he to testify in a court of law that the accused was *drunk*, would cause counsel for the defense to object to the evidence on the grounds that the witness was simply drawing a conclusion. Counsel would insist that the witness state facts and circumstances and that it was for the judge and jury to draw the

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inference of drunkenness, if any. The witness would thereupon probably say that the breath of the accused smelt of drink, that he was boisterous, vituperative, that he staggered; and he would go on relating such other relevant facts or acts as might be indicative of that more or less enviable state which the world generally associates with insobriety. For might not the witness well have, in very truth, been as sober as Mr. Volstead himself? To say that a man is drunk is not comment, but conclusion. Taking another view of the matter, when Mr. James Joyce makes his character ramble: "I could not feel more gruggy" (*Tales of Shem and Shaun, Imagist Anthology*, p. 122), it is neither comment nor conclusion, but admission or confession of fact, which should cook his goose beyond recall.

No charge of inconsistency can be sustained against Mr. Ford when he desires "to see English become at once colloquial and more exact." Good enough. But Mr. Ford's position appears awkward when he proclaims on one page his desire for such colloquial and exact English and on another page serves the reader with extracts from Mr. Joyce's *Tales*, wherein amongst other similar sentences we find this one: "for he was spizzing all over him like things manything in formication, boundlessly blissfilled in an allaballahbath of houris", etc., etc. What, we ask, can this be doing in the Imagist galley of colloquial and exact English? This is in no sense to be a reflection on Mr. Joyce's craftsmanship, but it reveals Mr. Ford sinning either against himself, or against Mr. Joyce or against the reader, or, possibly, perpetrating a very amusing hoax,—at which latter we are prepared to let it go.

What seems to be a discrepancy, due probably to nothing more than a slip of memory, has also found its way into Mr. Ford's preface. We are given to understand that in 1913, when Futurism was already a world movement, there had broken out mutiny in its ranks; there had come division, first Cubism, then Vorticism, and later, its by-product, Imagism. In *Pavannes and Divisions* Ezra Pound assures us that "the first use of the word 'Imagiste' was in my note to T. E. Hulme's five poems, printed at the end of my *Rispostes* in the autumn 1912." For the sake of argument let the origin of the Movement be fixed at that date, although the first *Des Imagistes* Anthology appeared two years later, 1914. In his Foreword, Mr. Ford asseverates that at the rise of the Imagist Movement, he had died and that it was ten years before he wrote another book. This is all extremely interesting, of course; only Mr. Ford's occult, if humorous, self-effacement and resurgence are slightly exaggerated. Ten years, whether dating from 1913 or 1914, would be 1923 or 1924, yet in the Bibliography at the end of the Anthology we find that two of Mr. Ford's new books, *On Heaven and Other Poems* and *A House* were published in 1918 and 1921. We can foresee the possible rejoinder that writing a book and publishing one are horses of different color, but just the same, in the interest of "all literary historians of the future," whom Mr. Glenn Hughes has at heart, this should be corrected or made clear. Mr. Hughes, by the way, is Mr. Ford's collaborator in the preparation of the Anthology.

It will be noticed that we have not expressed any opinion as to the poetic value of the Anthology. It is our mental twist, which we beg to be allowed to conserve, that we would no more think

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of criticizing poetry than we would a man's sigh, sorrow, sneeze, or snore. Montaigne has said that certain things are spoken by everyman according to his strength. So of poetry. What would be the sense of criticizing a man's strength? He may or may not make us sensible of it, and that is all there is to it. And it is on this point that our dissent from Anne Howe is complete and goes to the root. But we have no such scruples as to the editorial make-up of the *Imagist Anthology* 1930, which the publisher should not have permitted to appear in the carelessly edited manner in which it comes before the reader.

The most unpardonable editorial offence is the complete omission of Ezra Pound, the editor of the first Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*. In a semi-humorous postscript Mr. Ford endeavors to explain that Ezra Pound has been left out owing to his dilatoriness. But this curt dismissal is not altogether in harmony with Mr. Ford's customary smoothness and fine Italian hand in arranging things. We must not forget that it was the same Mr. Ford who wrote, doubtless with the tongue in his cheek, where we suspect he has a fondness for nesting that organ: "Mr. Pound as often as not is so unacquainted with English idioms as to be nearly unintelligible." Taking this opinion for what it is worth, and we take it to be worth nothing at all, we still cannot help wondering whether intransigent—in the instance before us, probably for very good and all but transparent reasons—should not have taken the place of dilatory. Mr. Pound dilatory? No, siree!

At the end of the volume there is appended a "Bibliography", which is utterly valueless, as it contains neither names of publishers nor places of publication, with one dominating exception, which is Joyce's *Tales told of Shem and Shaun*, where we find, in the front of the book, not only the publisher's name and the place of publication, but also the unbecoming and unprecedented addition, that the book was "limited to 650 copies (1929) and already out of print." We have made bold to italicize the four words to illustrate what sort of fraternal feeling and solidarity it is that the editor of the Anthology wished to see "manifested joyfully to the world." We raise the point, not of favoritism, but of bad taste.

Finally, the pre-prefatory Note already mentioned reads: "In 1912 certain young and almost unknown authors... published their poems together in their 'Imagist' Anthology." But Mr. Glenn Hughes says over his signature that "the first Imagist Anthology, called *Des Imagistes*, was edited by Ezra Pound and published in the spring 1914." The latter date is, in fact, the correct one. In an eloquent outburst he says further: "The Imagists knew when to let Imagism die",—but the two Archangels, Mr. Ford of Montparnasse, and Mr. Hughes of Seattle, Wash., knew better, and with the blast of a trumpety trump saw to it that the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

(E. W. T.)

BEDTIME STORY

by

Ruby Boardman.

*I love thee, Seraphina, and delight
In thy resemblance to a Carmelite
Laid in my bed, and cosily perverse
As a dove nested in a ruined hearse.
I love thy troubled mouth agape with sighs,
Lips twisted, nostrils moribund, and eyes
Like Harlequin's blind laughter of blue fire
Winking with indecision and desire.*

*I love thee, Seraphina, and confess
Thy dissolution is a jewelled dress
Spread brightly on ephebian knees; the stars
That wash the wall and lay the window-bars
In a long pattern on the painted floor
Conspire with us; a fluid mask is more
Malarial by starlight than a face
Leprous with bloom discoloured by the sun;
An orchid in a honey-bee's embrace
Is deadly as Sodoma's swooning nun.*

*Thou dost remind me of delightful things
Irrelevant of thee, thou morbid mummer!
Thy pleading arms are like swift swallow-wings
That spread mad motion in a languid summer.
Panurge's demon saw a fluted glass
Used delicately at the Devil's Mass
And placed, glittering, in a cabinet
Of ebony—I see thy clear throat set
In a black jacket like a crystal wedge.
Grant me, as neophyte, this privilege:
To serve thee at a Rabelaisian Mass?*

SOMEONE TO HATE

by

George Seldes.

They went up the Ritz elevator to the fourth floor. The French maid answered.

"Can we see Mrs. Kirkpatrick?" George said.

"I will ask the nurses." She left the door open.

Miss McSweeney came into the hallway. "I'm Miss McSweeney" she said.

"We want to see Mrs. Kirkpatrick," George began, "—this is Elliot of our Berlin office— I'm George Fish, the Paris correspondent."

"I know you—I mean, I've talked to you over the telephone—when the Marquise ordered me to call up and give instructions about editorials and things."

"The who?"

"We call Mrs. Kirkpatrick la Marquise. She's always telling us she has royal blood, and degraded herself in marrying shanty-Irish Kirkpatricks."

"How is she?"

"She got drunk yesterday and rolled out on the floor. She's very angry about it and drinking today to forget the pain, she says."

"Can we see her—Elliott is the man who is to conduct all your party from Paris to Karlsbad."

"Glad to know you." Miss McSweeney at last shook hands. "But I don't know. She's pretty bad. Wait a moment."

"Good Lord," said Elliott. "I didn't know the Marquise was a souse."

"You'll have a good time," said George, laughing, "you'll either get a big raise or fired. I don't know

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why they chose you for this job. We've got the train hired for day after tomorrow—twenty-five thousand francs—I hope the old witch sobers up. Last year we lost the money twice..."

"Did you say 'witch'?"

"...and you'd better be damned careful, it's wonderful the things she hears when she gets a hate on someone."

Miss McSweeney, that is, Miss Agnes McSweeney, appeared with her sister, Theresa McSweeney, and as they shook hands they moved into the salon, then the bedroom. The nurses left.

"Well, how do you do, Mrs. Kirkpatrick," said George Fish out of the habitual right corner of his mouth and with forced gusto, "Glad to see you looking so well—why, you look ten years younger than last year. How do you find Paris. I hope you're having a good..."

"Who the hell are you anyway?" a voice, deep and drunken, boomed from the Ritz pillows, "what the hell are you doing in my bedroom?"

"Why, you know me, you know me, Mrs. Kirkpatrick. Mrs. Kirkpatrick, I'm Fish, George Fish, I'm your Paris correspondent. I'm the head of your Paris bureau—of the *New York Chronicle*..."

"Oh, yes, I know you. I know you well. You're a rotten correspondent, George Fish. How many women are you living with at present? Get rid of your family, George Fish—it's disgusting—mother, father, brothers and sisters and wives and your children..."

"But I haven't got any children, Mrs. Kirkpatrick."

"Get rid of your family, father and mother, brothers and sisters and wives and your children, get rid of them, I won't have anybody with that much family working for me. You'll have to give me more time."

"And another thing, George Fish, I don't mind your living with that woman, so long you get rid of

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your family, and I don't mind your living with two Russian women, I don't mind that either, but let me tell you now that you won't work for me a day if you start living with three Russian women..."

"But Mrs. Kirkpatrick..."

"Don't you but me. It's my newspaper. I'm the one and only boss. I make managing editors and bust them—and correspondents. I can throw you down the stairs. I've got enough money to have everything I want in this world, praise the Lord. Look what I did to Floyd Norton!—out in the rain and the snow. You thought he was sitting pretty. You envied him. The Boss, eh? the Boss! It makes me laugh..."

"Pour a whisky for me, Fish—you don't want one yourself? No? I knew you'd say not. Well, you ain't going to get one either for saying that. Probably drink like a f..., ha! ha! ha! that's a good one, like a fish, George Fish, drink like a George Fish, you do when I don't see you and come up here and try to tell me, try to tell ME to my face you don't drink. Well I know better, I know about the two Russian women, I know everything."

Her drunken hand lifted the quivering glass to her twitching old lips and she slopped whisky. Over the blotched brown parchment of her face came a saturnine beatification and water seeped over her red eyelids. The head, in its silk nightcap, slowly sank into the pillow and the blue eyes which eighty-one years had dimmed but not extinguished, regarded the two men with a watery-blue stare at once sophisticated and senile, comic and false and very wise.

"This is Robert Elliott", said George.

She grunted.

"He is your Berlin correspondent."

Elliott nodded. The woman raised her head.

"You come from Germany?" she asked.

Elliott said yes.

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"Well, goddam the Germans."

Fish and Elliott looked sideways suddenly, at each other.

"Yes, and goddam the French too. I've suffered... I fell out of bed in this damned country."

Fish and Elliott said nothing.

"And goddam the Japanese, too" the old lady continued and reached for more whisky. Her hand faltered. Fish hesitated, then helped her. She closed her eyes, trembled and drank, then fell exhausted into the Ritz luxury. Again a beatific smile came over her wrinkles. She moved her lips.

"And goddam all the Jews and goddam all the Roman Catholics—how I hate them all."

Her eyes finally closed.

Fish and Elliott tiptoed out. In the hall they stopped for a relieving laugh.

"There", said Elliott, "you have the whole foreign policy of the *New York Chronicle* in a nutshell."

* * * * *

The morning of the second day, Elliott called at the Ritz. The hall was piled with baggage. Everybody was excited.

"How's your Marquise" he asked Agnes.

"Theresa's decided to go into a convent," she replied. "This morning! What do you think of that! We're so excited. Theresa's going into a convent. She's going to be a nun. What do you think of that?"

"I don't..."

"She's going into a convent, I said," replied Agnes, "after three months with the Marquise, it's finished her, Theresa. My little sister. She can't stand this life any more, she's through, she's going into a convent."

There was a banging around in the next room. A voice boomed through the closed bedroom doors.

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"Miss McSweeney, Miss McSweeney, come into my room this minute, and tell me the name of the man in St. Louis whom I hate!"

Agnes McSweeney went.

Theresa came out. Elliott suddenly noticed she was pale and saintly.

"Is it true?" he said.

"Agnes told you?"

"Yes".

"It is awful. I can't stand it. I've been a nurse five years now counting my training. This is the worst. You find some strange people, there's a little humanity in them—when they're better, anyways. You don't expect people to be nice when they're sick, but they do appreciate. This one isn't sick. It's just an excuse to get whisky. This one is all hate. She hates everyone. She hates herself. She even hates God I believe."

Agnes came out.

"She's really much better. We got her a bottle of sherry and put condurango into it—doctor said so—we fooled her and that's the only thing that will save her life. She's grumbling. Doctor said she'd die any day if she continued drinking two quarts of whisky. She's got a big lump over her heart..."

"Must I see her?"

"Lots of time before train time."

"What does she mean by cursing Catholics?"

"The Kirkpatrick's are from Ulster."

"But you are Catholic?"

"Yes. She won't have any but Catholic nurses."

"I can't understand it."

"Neither could we. But if they were of her own religion she wouldn't have anyone to curse all day and all night and all the year round."

"Don't you care?"

"I've had her three years. It's Theresa's first time

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with her."

They knocked, entered the bedroom.

"How do you do, Mrs. Kirkpatrick."

"Now you get out of here and don't stick your nose into the keyhole" the invalid said, looking at Elliott, and Miss McSweeney shrugged her shoulders and went out.

"They're trying to poison me. I'm on to their plot" the old woman whispered. "Taste it."

Elliott tasted the false whisky.

"Pretty good whisky, but French I suppose."

"French hell, and you're a liar—its damned rotten whisky and its going to poison me. I wish I had brought my own—we get it in Canada, get it in, in our own ships. This doesn't taste even as good as bootleg. It's poison. I'll get rid of those Catholic girls. I'll send them home on a cheap-ship—sheep-ship, ha! ha! ha! sheep-ship, cheap-ship, sheep-ship— I'll get even with them, trying to poison me. They want to see me dead. I'll bet some of my relatives are paying them. But I'll fool them. I'll get even with them in my will. I've fooled them all. But I'll fool them better, because I'm not going to die. They'll all die. I'll outlive them all. You wait and see...

"I remember Abraham Lincoln. Nasty old man. Mother always said when we had to go to the White House, mother said 'Now Ellen and Ruth, be very careful—don't let that nasty man kiss you. Don't let him play with you. He may be president of the United States, but he has dirty fingernails.

"And Freddy Grant. Freddy Grant couldn't ride a horse. I can remember that too. Lying in a ditch. His feet were stuck funny. And his papa, that's Ulysses S. Grant, and he drank terribly and he was saying 'Get up Freddy Grant, aren't you ashamed of yourself. Getting thrown by a horse. Your father's

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the greatest general that ever lived and you are thrown by a horse. A tame horse. Ellen is a better rider than you.' And I was too. They're all dead now."

A large smile of superiority curved the parched lips slowly.

"What's in the paper today?"

"Only Lindbergh."

"What's he ever done?"

"You've read the papers, Mrs. Kirkpatrick? Last week he..."

"Yes, I know—but what's that? If I were a man I could have done that. You call up Fish at once and tell him I won't have any more Lindbergh in my paper. Tell him to cut it in the Paris edition and cable New York to cut it. No—wait a minute. Call up Fish and tell him to announce that the *New York Chronicle* is awarding a prize to Lindbergh. Tell him to announce that I will award Lindbergh ten dollars. There! That will show him what I think of him!"

Elliott hesitated, looked at the mean expression in the drunken face, and in all seriousness had to phone the Paris editor to announce Mrs. Kirkpatrick's prize of \$10 to Lindbergh for flying across the Atlantic.

* * * * *

"How much am I paying for this special train?" she said when Elliott came to call on her the next morning.

"Twenty-five thousand francs."

"It's all mine, isn't it?"

Yes", replied Elliott, "but I think the conductor let a friend of his sleep in one of the twelve empty berths last night."

"It wasn't a friend of his. I know who it was."

"Really?"

"Yes. It was John Racket"

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"Really now, Mrs. Kirkpatrick."

"Yes. He came in after midnight. He knocked on my door. I said who is there. He said John Racket I said what do you want. He said I want to come in. I said what for. He said to make love to you. I said, oh, go away you are too old a fellow for me. But he banged on the door. I heard him all right. He banged on the door with his hands and feet and he tried and tried to break in. It was awful. I tell you it is awful, even when a girl like me is beginning to enter middle age she can have no peace from the men."

Elliott asked for her passport. She refused to show it. He knew why. Three years earlier, when she had made the same trip, the passport gave her age as 79. This year she had it permanently fixed at 76.

At the German-Czechoslovakian frontier the maid and the nurses took Mrs. Kirkpatrick off in a wheelchair amidst a great flutter of flunkeys from the Karlsbad hotel. They let the heavy baggage go on to Czechoslovakia. "Better have the passports ready, Miss McSweeney" said Elliott, whose sole reason for conducting the party was to handle the passports. "Where are the passports?" the elder McSweeney asked the French maid.

"Dans la malle—diable!—J'ai oublié. Le train est parti."

"The train is gone" said Miss McSweeney, "all the passports were put into a trunk by our efficient French maid."

Elliott stopped the wheelers. For ten years he had been smuggling a typewriter and a pound of American pipe tobacco through thirty-seven frontiers. "Wheel her down the platform" he ordered.

It was a long platform. The old lady grumbled. They came to the freight yards. There was an open gate. Beyond it, city streets. Elliott smuggled Mrs. Kirkpatrick into Czechoslovakia.

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Herr Doktor Rudolf Pessl was editor in chief of the *Karlsbader Anzeiger*, member of the city council, bearded, dignified and incidentally local correspondent of the *New York Chronicle*. With all the Central European formalities, he came to pay his respects to the distinguished visitor and his employer. He bowed, he kissed the papery hand, he murmured compliments.

"Buncombe," she said.

"If there is anything I can do to make the stay of the noble lady pleasant," he said in his third parting bow, "she has only to command me."

"Ugh," she replied, "I'll phone you to come around some day and then you can go out and call a cab for me."

When Herr Doktor had snorted out of the room she said, "Europeans are too cocky. I have to teach them their place."

To her physician, Professor Doktor Heinrich Teller, who had said to her "I am glad to find you looking so well," she replied "You are a damned liar."

He came into the salon and told the nurses that the clot over her heart was dangerously big, she might pass out at any second, and don't give her any whisky.

"Condurango and sherry?"

"And not too much of that. Why did she change doctors this year? Why didn't she send for Blumenthal?"

"She said Blumenthal was a d...," Miss McSweeney hesitated, then censored the Marquise's adjective with her teeth, and continued "Jew, and she didn't want Jews or Catholics around her."

"You are Catholic, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"And I am a Jew. Does she know that?"

"She does."

"Then why does she have us?"

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"To remind her to hate people, I suppose," said Agnes McSweeney.

"La Marquise de Sade?" said the doctor.

"Who?" said Miss McSweeney.

"Never mind" said the doctor, "do her relatives want us to hold her life?"

"They certainly do not."

"How do you know?"

"I know."

"Is she any value to anybody," mused the doctor. "But we have our ethics, *nicht wahr, Schwester?*"

"We are paid, aren't we?" said the practical Schwester.

"I suppose so. Blumenthal told me the Paris auditor of the *Chronicle* put up a lot of kick over his bill last year. A mere \$300. Fifty visits. And he saved her life for her. She has fifty million, hasn't she?"

"Blumenthal refused her whisky. That's why she kicked. And Blumenthal saved her life. Perhaps that's why the auditor kicked."

"How's that brother of hers, what's his name?"

"Wilkie. He's two years older, just as awful, and refuses to die."

"Do they at least love one another?"

"Do they love one another? Do you know what she said to me yesterday? She said 'How I love the Wilkies! How I love to go to all the Wilkie funerals!'"

"She talks funerals and death to me, too" said the doctor. "I admire her zest for life. Do you realize, Sister, she is one of the most wonderful cases we have ever had. We must keep her alive. Don't give her any whisky."

* * * * *

The sound of glass cracking and things falling

GEORGE SELDES

broke up the game in the salon. The two nurses, the French maid and Elliott had been playing bridge. La Marquise was supposed to be asleep. The four rushed for the bedroom. Bottles and boxes were wet on the floor. The Marquise slumped exhausted in twisted pillows. She had had most of a quart of whisky. A hotel employ   had probably smuggled it.

"You ghouls," she said. She breathed hard two or three times before she could enunciate. "Watching—in the next room—for me to die... I'll fool you yet... I'm younger..."

The hallucination of youth had come with the whisky. There were rouge and powder boxes crumpled, overturned, in the bedclothes, on the floor. Wavering old hands had opened them but could make little with the sticky and tricky stuffs. She had smeared red gashes over her forehead and had stuck her nose into some cream. Lumps of white paste clung to her face, horrible and comic. Red gashes and lumps of white cream melted and dripped. Her eyes were half choked with ointments and powder—her hands were sticky with a mess. She was a woman of eighty smeared like a clown with custard pie for a movie comedy. And horrible red gashes. She had pulled off her nice clean night cap and gotten rouge and coldcream into her thin white hair, and the pink scalp shining through. Her nightclothes were red and yellow with beauty stuffs and full of white powder.

"God!" said Theresa McSweeney, and pointed.

The silk nightgown over where the heart is was moving of itself, up and down, up and down, very fast, irregularly, violently.

"Run for the doctor" she said to the maid.

"You think"—the woman gasped "I'm going to—die, I'll—fool you all." The words came in spasms from a clotted mouth.

THIS QUARTER

"You think—I won't go to—heaven—I'll fool you—all. I'll—get to heaven—allright I'll get in—I'll go right—up to Saint Peter I'll—I won't—I won't even say—'Saint'—to him I'll say 'Peter'—just 'Peter'—I'll say 'Peter'—you, you, YOU—denied the Lord—three times you—you crook you—you let ME in." She made a terrific effort with her elbow and hand. She was actually shoving huge Saint Peter aside—and stepping into heaven. Her hand and elbow made this terrific effort, and—when the doctor came, he said he was too late. The nurses scraped the globs of cream and powder and rouge from the face and got most of it out of the hair, so that after a while the dead woman did not look so terrible.



Drawing, by Joseph Hecht.

ROMANCE LANGUAGES IN THE UNITED STATES

by

Hugh A. Smith.

Twenty-five years ago in the state of Wisconsin, of some three million population, not a word of French, Spanish or Italian was taught in any of its two hundred high schools, or other public-supported institutions of learning, with the one exception of the State University. In its largest city, Milwaukee, with a half-million inhabitants, the writer of this article struggled for two years with indifferent or hostile school authorities, in order to introduce a modest two years of French instruction into four of its largest high schools, and this had to be placed under the control of the superintendent of German, who specified, in the bond, that all French instruction should be given solely by the regular teachers of German. No chances were taken for an upset from this newcomer and the bright, sparkling language of France was allowed to go to the post only when handicapped with a heavy Teutonic accent.

Even in the highest educational institutions of the state—the University and the private colleges—the total of French students at this time numbered only a few hundred, with two or three score in Spanish and an occasional, sporadic class of a half-dozen in Italian.

To-day French is given in most of the state's good high schools, Spanish is found in a considerable number, Italian is occasionally offered, and the total of high school students in these languages runs into

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thousands. The University has twenty-five hundred students in French language and literature, fifteen hundred in Spanish, and four or five hundred in Italian. A similar development is to be noted in the private colleges.

The example of Wisconsin in the development of the study of the Romance languages, during the past quarter of the century, gives a fair idea of the revolution which has taken place in this respect throughout the whole country. With considerable variation in proportions, the figures given for this state would be representative for most of the other states. Only in the East was there sufficient French taught twenty-five years ago to change materially the picture given above, and in the East also French has gained greatly during this period and Spanish and Italian have, for the first time, come into a place of importance. A generation ago Romance languages occupied relatively a negligible place in the schools of the United States. To-day the faculties of Romance Language are among the largest of our universities and colleges, and the total number of students following this subject in all our educational institutions are counted in hundreds of thousands.

Obviously so remarkable a revolution must have had other causes in addition to the rapid general increase in the number of our high school and college students. In fact, two such causes are outstanding. French owes much of its present favorable position to the World War. Despite the fact that it had been making steady progress for some time before, especially in the Middle West, where it had had to contend with the jealous monopoly held by German, it was the war which gave it the first real opportunity and stimulated a general interest in this study. Indeed, so intense was this interest that French instruction came near being surfeited by its sudden prosperity.

HUGH A. SMITH

In 1917, every American hoped to come to France very soon and wished to learn French. The French departments in our schools and colleges were flooded with students. French teachers were at a premium. Any one with a modicum of French, and willing to try to teach, was employed—some for no better reason than that of having a contract for a salary, and no students, in another subject. Many self-respecting chairmen of French departments in our colleges and universities lost the favor of their deans and presidents because they resisted the attempts of these sorely tried officials to make of the French faculties dumping grounds for expensive instructional machinery, purchased for other purposes, but temporarily useless, and for which the institution was paying ruinous storage charges. The windows of many a French classroom shook with the guttural roar of French *unter den Linden gesprochen*, "because the French of Paris was to him unknown". For the next few years, the most difficult problems for the heads of French departments were to teach French to their French teachers, and to replace those who were too old to learn.

Spanish has developed, and, one might almost say, come into being, in our schools, through similar occasions, although this language has profited by two wars instead of by one. The Spanish-American war was essentially the creative cause of the wide interest in Spanish in our schools and colleges; and by furnishing us with considerable colonies or protectorates of Spanish-speaking peoples, it created a permanent and growing incentive for the study of Spanish, especially for commercial use and for the improvement of our political and social relations with Spanish-American peoples. This steady growth of the Spanish language was further greatly accelerated by the World War, when Spanish departments fell

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heir to a part of the heritage left by the collapse of the German.

In this last case there is still a considerable danger that this inheritance may prove to be a Grecian gift, unless the Hispanists keep outside the walls of their citadel the argument of practical utility. Before the War, German was, in all our schools, given preference over French, because of its supposed practical usefulness. On account of our large German immigration and because the German speech was so frequently heard on our streets, it was thought to be most useful to learn German, despite the fact that there were ten times as many German-Americans as were needed to sell bread or to talk to bank depositors in the German tongue, and that obviously the most useful thing for them was to master English speech as soon as possible. But hundreds of schools introduced German on this plea and thousands of boys and girls studied it for no other reason.

Undoubtedly, it is much more generally useful for Americans to study Spanish than it ever was to study German. We have millions of Spanish-speaking subjects in our colonies, and are bordered by, or closely bound up with, many millions more. It is highly important for our political and social relations with these that we understand their life, psychology and customs, and our best approach is through their language, literature and history. In this sense, the mastery of the Spanish tongue is of the widest interest for us. But the practical argument for the study of Spanish taken, as it usually is, in the commercial sense, may be easily overdone. Our Spanish teachers alone could furnish us all the Spanish-speaking commercial travellers that we may need to send into Spanish-America, even if they did not train another student for the next ten years.

The plain facts are that any argument for a wide-

spread study of foreign languages in American schools and colleges must rest primarily on cultural grounds, with the word *cultural* taken naturally in its widest sense, and including not only literary values, but all the broadening effects that the knowledge of another country's language, history and life may give. If this were not true and if only practical or commercial reasons justified our studying foreign languages, then nine-tenths of the hundreds of thousands who are now doing so would be better engaged in learning stenography and bookkeeping.

The present extensive study of the Romance languages in the United States can only be justified by their important cultural value in a broad, liberal education, of which Americans stand in special need to offset the natural isolation and self-sufficiency of the American continent, and to give them the tolerance and understanding necessary in the large rôle they must play in world affairs. It is this fact which makes the present period a critical one in Romance language instruction in America. The present moment is one when everything can be gained, but which must be quickly seized and utilized, or most of the potential profit will be lost. Also, it is far from certain that the faculties of Romance languages in American universities and colleges realize, as fully as they should, the urgency or the exact character of the important mission that is in their hands.

The task of giving so many new teachers the necessary technical equipment in the language and literature has professionalized the views of many of our ablest professors, and led to a narrow specialization, inimical to the broad cultural aim that should be the informing spirit of their work. The routine of teaching so much language, syntax, phonetics, philology and facts of literature to future teachers has chilled their humanism and warped their perspective.

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Undoubtedly, the training and competence of the teachers of the Romance languages have been greatly improved during the past ten years, and this was desperately needed. The best organized and most effective courses to be found anywhere, in the field of Romance language and literature, are now being given in American universities to major and graduate students in these subjects. But what is equally desirable at present would be more professors thoroughly imbued with the culture of the language and literature they are teaching, and equally informed in American literature and history, who can serve as inspirational interpreters of the Romance literatures and civilizations to the great mass of American undergraduate students, who are not studying for professional purposes.

There is, it is true, reason to hope that this need will be met.

At Paris alone there are today five or six thousand American students and a large proportion of these are preparing to teach French. More than ever before, our future professors are spending a part of their time for preparation in the countries whose languages they are to teach, and acquiring a more sympathetic knowledge of the life and culture of those countries. It is to be hoped that they will bring more of this broadly cultural spirit into their future work.

That the Romance cultures can furnish an element that would be precious to American civilization is certain. The value would be all the greater because the foundation of our civilization is Anglo-Saxon. America needs the artistic interests and the broad tolerance that come from such contacts. In fact, while our interest in Romance studies is too recent to bear its ripest fruits, the influences are already felt. It is true that we have had for generations important and influential scholars, writers and artists

who owe much to such culture, but for the most part these influences are to be counted in individuals and have not decisively affected a whole generation or a school of literature or of thought.

Today, we have at least promise of such general influence. In our younger generation of writers, for example, those who owe nothing to Romance literature and cultures, who have had no contact with these, would be the exceptions rather than the majority.

May we not already see some very tangible effects of this contact? For example, there has been no more striking transformation during a single generation than the progress made in America in overcoming a foolish and hypocritical prudery of language and thought, one that prevented our facing sensibly some of the most important problems of life.

One of our early books of etiquette, *The Perfect Hostess*, warns the delicately nurtured gentlewoman that it is improper to keep, side by side on the same shelf, works of male and female authors "especially if these should happen to be unmarried." To-day, the American hostess who furnishes the authors themselves with separate bedrooms considers her responsibility in the matter of the proprieties satisfied, and is no more shocked than a European to hear them "call a spade a spade," which they very freely do.

No doubt the causes of this real revolution in our attitude and language are multiple, but the widespread reading of works of Romance authors, with their franker Latin speech and thought, on matters formerly taboo in America, is perhaps not the least of these causes.

Some of our forms of art also are reflecting general influences that come from such sources. The number of American plays recently given or now running in European theaters has caused wide-spread discussion.

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Perhaps one of the most interesting comments on this subject was recently made by Professor Strowski, who seems to have considered this American theater now appearing in France as virtually a return of borrowed goods. Undoubtedly, this would be saying too much and is probably more than the critic meant. The American drama in content, ideas, and life is thoroughly American. But it is perhaps not too much to say that American dramatists have learned a large part of their dramatic art and technique from the French. For some time, our writers have been familiar with the French playwrights, and their work has clearly profited by a study of these consummate exponents of dramatic technique in the modern comedy.

Influences such as these are wholly to be favored. The United States is too large, too positive and too varied in its culture and ethnic composition to be in any danger of becoming a satellite of another country in any of its forms of art. It can absorb readily and with profit all of the art and culture that a contact with the Romance civilizations may give. It is greatly to be hoped that such sympathetic relations will be still greater in the future, and in this connection it should be remembered that the only really important and permanent centers for the diffusion of the Romance cultures in the United States are the faculties giving instruction in their language and literature. Unlike Germany, France is scarcely represented in our permanent population, and the representatives of Italy and Spain are largely from the uneducated classes. Every teacher of Romance languages and literature is, or should be, an interpreter of Romance culture and an ambassador of good will and sympathy between countries.

PRACTICAL BLUES

by

George Whitsett.

*In the interval
Of my bamboo vine;
Oomvah, Oomvah
Aphrodisiacal rainbow vine
Lemme lay my rainbow down.
Lemme lay my
Lemme lay my Mamie down.*

*Uncle such is Uncle said.
Mamie days are
All day rainy
All day Mamie days in bed.
Thoughts go whumming in my head
Of the gum that Mamie chooses
Mamie uses when in bed.*

*Carnival, I call to you
Penitent upon my pride.
When I meant that I cajoled you
My intent was ramified.*

CATASTROPHE

by

Margaret Dreyer.

She was just a little thing and she lived in a room in a *pension* with pink and gilt and blue wall paper. She had come a very long way and she was often tired. She would lie on her bed at night where the air blew in sharp and clear from the snow fields through the partly open window. She would not live very long. She did not mind that so much. She was sorry, of course. She had not wanted to die, not when she was fifteen and she thought that life would be so beautiful. But now she was so often tired. She would lie on her bed at night and the cold clear air from the mountains would come in the partly open window and fill the room.

Yet sometimes she was worried. She had such a very little and she never felt quite certain of that. She had a silly weak-minded mother who handed what property her father had left over to her relatives. She looked surprised and hurt if anyone did not show all reverence and respect for her relatives. They flattered her. They said, "Oh, Tee, you are so charming." Her mother had never been charming; she was not charming now, and while she did not actually believe them when they said this, it pleased her without her realizing that it did, and her relatives could do whatever they wanted.

... She seemed such a long way away and she was so often tired. She had been a pretty little thing with fine silky light hair and a big crushed bow like a pink flower on top of her head. She had never been

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very strong. A fair blue-veined child in long waisted dresses with short standing-out skirts, she had run along the sandy walks of a tangled garden and seen the pouting frogs come out of their holes before the sun was hot.

She did not know what she would do when her money gave out. "Maybe I'll die first," she thought. She did not want to die, but it was so hard to struggle. She was so often tired. She lay on her bed in her room with pink and gilt and blue wall paper and did not care so much at night whether she lived or died. Only in her heart was a great vacant place where before had been the urge and force and surge to live.

The mountains turned a wonderful purple color in the late clear evenings when the nice detached ladies and people with dogs went to walk in the little town that was on end. Later they were deeper still, the color of the late evening sky, and then they all melted together in a void out of which came the clear cold breath.

At night she would lie on her bed quite still. All the place was still. There was the electric drop attachment filling the place with light, and there was the fast hurried ticking of her watch and that was all. Those were the only two presences besides herself in the room.

Once when she was a little thing she had stood on a sweet-gum stump in the middle of a field. There were little patches of sweet-gum where the tree had bled when it was cut down. Shoots had grown up from the root where it would not die. Her father had stood her on the stump in a great wide field. She remembered how the saddle leather squeaked when she slid down off it. She was just a tiny thing in a short frilly skirt. Her father had set her down on the middle of the stump, and it was as though he charged her,

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it was as though a trust, an honor, was placed upon her shoulders. She the l'Aiglon. She must live. She must grow up to be worthy, into a woman. She must carry on. He would die, but she must live. She must fulfill the hopes which death would cut short for him. The field stretched away like a sea of green cotton leaves. The cotton flowers were still pink and wet with dew.

She remembered how it was: Little blue morning glories in among the corn. And a spindley pine wood always far off at the edge of a field. It was June then.

She had perhaps always been the kind of person who would not live very long. Some people are born with only so much strength that can only last for such a period of time...

There were deep snow fields lying in the laps of the highest mountains. If you poked your head out of the window you could see them very plain in the morning. Sea-gulls screamed harshly as they flew in from the lake.

... As far as she could see the field that stretched away was her father's. And he had meant that all that land that was his because it was his, was hers, and that she would live not by it, but it by her. And that the two of them, the green rippling field and the tiny girl on the stump, would live from each other and by each other, and so one, they could not perish. He was proud of them both, but fearful of having to give them up. A tiny girl with brave shy eyes and a clear blue-veined forehead, she had stood on the stump in her thin-soled black kid slippers and taken it all seriously. It was as though she were her father's age and she understood. He believed in her as though she were his age; he had talked to her sometimes about his plans as though she were another man, and in the way that lonely people can. She

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remembered once waking in the night to hear the owls hoot, to hear the owls laughing among themselves down in the woods, and to hear the wind blow outside. She remembered one night hearing her father beat a tattoo on the head of the bed. She remembered waking once when it must have been late in the midnight; she heard her father drumming in the dark on the head of the bed, she had scarcely known what it had meant, nor why—when he must have been lying awake in the night and worrying. He had taught her to tell the different cards apart when she was four. He had thought that she was smart. A handsome sensitive man with tired violet eyes and hair almost white at a little past forty—he had died when she was only five.

It was a clear still night. She lay on the bed under the feather puff in the room that was filled with light from the hanging electric attachment. She had been reading the paper from home. It lay on the bed in a half-crumpled state. "...It is fairly well established that the earth's history began about 1,500,000,000 years ago when another star approached and attracted from it the particles that we call planets," she saw on the scarcely real black and white page. "This event may some day be repeated—but in the form of a catastrophe.

"There is nothing that could make the earth unfit for life until it comes in contact with another celestial body and is thus destroyed. In all probability this will be as far in the future as the earlier event was in the past."

It seemed odd that the earth that people took so seriously and thought so large was after all only a speck in space. One life, then, that could suffer so deeply and beat its wings so futilely against the stones until all the lightness and floating shape were gone—that was scarcely an incident in time, only part

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of the great blue vagueness of the sky. Scarcely individual.

At night she could sometimes hear the elderly couple talking in the adjoining room. She did not mind the thought of dying then so much, not if life must come to that.

All the streets of the town went up hill or down hill according to the direction one was going, and every other person led a dog. In the morning you could hear a sharp toy dog barking on the floor beneath. So he was taken out a little later with a leash—and with bells on! Every other house was a *pension*, and those that were not were *écoles* for the young and *maisons de santé*. You sometimes wondered where the townspeople lived—or were there any townspeople other than those that kept *pensions* and sold flowers from buckets and jugs on the pavement?

All the ladies washed out their underclothes at night. All the ladies read papers or books propped up before them during meals at each little table for one on which there was a spray of chrysanthemums. At night there were sensibly low-heeled oxfords placed outside of doors and the refined maid with little earrings went around turning down beds. There were little shaded lights in rooms swung up on balconies, and that was all.

High up the other balconies hung, hanging in space, looking out over the everlasting mountains and the lake. Everlasting?—“Some day this event will be repeated—but in the form of a catastrophe.” The trains rushed by in the sheer drop below where the track was laid.

She did not go down to dinner but lay on her bed under the feather puff in the room that was quite still, and the clear air came in through the window. One night she had had a little fruit that the maid

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brought up. She ate the fruit with a towel spread over her knees. "*Attendez.*" Fumbling in her purse she had found and given the maid a two-franc piece. Strange what a two-franc piece could do! The maid had not got her up so early to do the room the next morning—and she had a whole half an hour more to lie in bed. The *jeune fille* who brought up the chocolate the next morning beamed upon her, whereas hitherto she had been a trifle surly.

The euonymus bushes were cold and hard, dark and shining in the little side garden that was never pretty. But that was in the morning, for at night the leaves had gone to sleep and been taken up into the oneness of the dark. In the mornings a girl student practised on her piano. It turned the whole place into a boarding school, and in the loud minor notes of the piano that crashed out from a room upstairs was all the heartbreak and great pain of young love that is born to die. At such times sea-gulls flapped in, screaming harshly from the lake.

But as she lay in her room, still, still, on her bed, all the more recent unrelative incidents passed from her and she saw once more fields of rustling cane. A poison-oak vine climbed about a sweet-gum stump that had bled where it had been cut down. A big-eyed rabbit lived in the stump and on moonlight nights he would leap out across the furrows. But that young buck was dead now, his fur one with the mold, and the stump rotted or grown up into a little tree...

She was such a long way away and she was so often tired. At night as she lay on her bed in the room with pink and gilt and blue wall paper, she would not care, not if she lived nor died. It was so hard to struggle. She lay still under the feather puff and the present slipped from her. She almost ceased to realize that she was anyone, a person with a rudder to grasp

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and steer, and it all seemed less real than the clear cold air.

Then, too, there were the trains that rushed by, far off, yet near, in the sheer drop just below where the tracks were laid, like an inevitable oncoming fate, an inescapable doom, as expressed by a chorus in a Greek tragedy.

But the mountains were there although no one could see them, all through the night, though they, too, were melted into that—the vast backdrop of the void in which they drifted.

ONE ALMOST MIGHT

by

A.S.J. Tessimond.

*wouldnt you say
wouldnt you say one day
with a little more time or a little more patience one
[might
disentangle for separate, deliberate, slow delight
one of the moment's hundred strands, unfray
beginnings from endings, this from that, survey
say a square inch of the ground one stands on, touch
part of oneself or a leaf or a sound (not clutch
or cuff or bruise but touch with fingertip, ear-
tip, eyetip, creeping near yet not too near);
might take up life and lay it on one's palm
and encircling it in closeness, warmth and calm,
let it lie still, then stir smooth-softly, and
tendril by tendril unfold (there on one's hand)?
one might examine eternity's cross-section
for a second, with slightly more patience, more time
[for reflection?*

CAT

*To walk as you walk, green eye, smiler, not
even ostentatiously alone but simply
alone... arching the back in courteous discourtesy,
gathering the body as a dancer before an unworthy
audience, treading earth scantily—a task to be done
and done with, girt (curt introvert) for private
precise avoidance of the undesired,
pride-attired, generalissimo
knife-eyed, bisector of moonshine with indigo
shadow, scorner of earth-floor, flaunter of
steelhard sickle curve against the sky...!*

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

by

Hilaire Hiler.

That vague figure, the "man in the street," conceives of artists as, at best, people not quite in their right mind, and at worst, as long-haired "nuts" who should be locked up or at least taken care of and "straightened out." The artist gets his share of revenge in his contemptuous anathematizations of everything "bourgeois." Like many other popular ideas, however, this attitude of the layman, based doubtless on the ancient connection which has so long been supposed to exist between genius and madness, may have some justification.

The Goncourts, followed by Lombroso, built up a theory (supported by a considerable array of facts on the part of the latter writer) to show that if artistic production was not definitely the result of mental activity identical to that which is present in cases of mental derangement, nevertheless so many parallels, symptomatically speaking, seemed to show themselves, that there must be much in common between the creative artist and the madman. There was much talk of "Superior Degenerates" and "equivalents of larvated epilepsy" (Lombroso); and the lives of Lucretius, Tacitus, Bonaventure des Periers, Pascal, Fra Angelico, Cellini, etc., were cited to illustrate these theories. The viewpoint thus developed had a wide but short-lived vogue.

Today the artist is viewed by such psychologists as Otto Rank as being far removed from the domain

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of insanity, and is placed by this psycho-analytic author in a position midway between the ordinary dreamer and the neurotic subject. As interpreted by Havelock Ellis, he would place the lower forms of art, such as myth-making, as standing near to dreams—and the higher forms, such as drama, philosophy, and the founding of religions, near to psycho-neurosis.

Whatever view is taken regarding artistic productions, the large part played by the subconscious in even the sanest, that is to say the most easily comprehended forms, cannot be denied. Two examples taken at random, concerning artists whom the average layman would consider as being quite sane, may serve to illustrate. Charles Baudouin, discussing the mental processes of Victor Hugo, says: "The employment of his time at Guernsey has remained celebrated. In the afternoon he did not write a single verse. It was the time for taking a drive, the time for profound meditation, when in the hypnosis of vague obsessions the poet evoked mentally unachieved visions, and exchanged but few words, obviously absent from his surroundings. The work once launched continued during sleep. At five o'clock in the morning, Hugo would get to work and exteriorize upon paper the poem which had formed itself within him."

An even more striking instance of the workings of the subconscious is furnished by Sem, the fashionable caricaturist, who says, as cited by Dr. Pierre Prost, "When I look about coldly, my pencil sheathed, my eye resting, I have an ordinary normal vision. I see just as everyone else sees." Sem goes on to state that he puts himself into a special mental state before drawing, but consciously makes two or three rather groping realistic sketches which he considers as having no artistic value in themselves. He

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memorizes the face of his victim (anyone who has seen his work will agree as to the choice of this term), and only then attempts his final drawing. "But in order that my operations should be successful," he adds, "I must isolate myself, detach myself absolutely from my surroundings; and if at the exact moment when I am beginning the drawing, some one speaks to me or I am distracted by the least incident, the sharp and bitter image evaporates, it all disappears, the plate is clouded."

But, if it is admitted that the subconscious must play a part in artistic production, there are certain implications regarding the nerves which must also be admitted. In day-dreaming, or reverie, the subconscious comes near the surface, that is to say that the dreamer is in a state of mind where his subconscious occupies an equal, if not larger place, than his conscious mind. From the viewpoint of the psychologist this is extremely injurious to his nerves, for at such time the mind is said to be open to adverse auto-suggestions which cumulatively tend to render a person with nervous tendencies much more nervous than if he indulged in no such "empty musings." The nervous person will be advised to live a very regular life, to keep occupied at all costs, rigidly to avoid reveries, and in short to practise a busy regularity which is the very antithesis of a so-called Bohemian life.

If, moreover, we assume that most artists lead Bohemian lives, it is clear that from a medico-psychological standpoint they are doing the very worst thing to their nerves that they could possibly do. Neurosis is now cured by a rigidly organized program of activity where every minute of the patient's waking time is utilized by occupations which by their nature require a full measure of activity on the part of his conscious mind. Yet the "neuro" tends toward

HILAIRE HILER

reverie, and the reverie toward neurosis. A vicious circle is thus formed. Dr. Jean Vinchon admits that an artist cannot lead the regular life of a shopkeeper's assistant, even though, for his nerves' sake, perhaps he should.

A simple thought upon which other theories might be based comes uncalled to mind if one thinks of the lives of such highly sensitive personalities as Poe, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Alfred Jarry, De Quincey, Théophile Gautier, Keisei Yeisen, and many others. Perhaps these men were irritating their already sensitive nerves—in the same manner as Jimmy Valentine irritated his sensitive fingertips in order to feel the delicate combination by which, and by which only, the heavy door of the strong-box could be opened.

IN TRIBUTE
TO
THE MEMORY
OF
RALPH CHEEVER
DUNNING

Friend, Poet, Thinker
obit July third 1930.

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